

Here

The University Library



GIFT

Denny Gust

University of Chicago
Libraries



GIFT OF

Justin Smith.

THE
MYSTERY OF LIFE,

AND

OTHER PAPERS.

BY

THEOPHILUS PARSONS.

PHILADELPHIA :
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1879.

BX 8721
P27

Copyright, 1879,
BY THEOPHILUS PARSONS.

NOTE.

IN these papers there will be found much repetition. They are not connected as chapters in a book, but are independent of each other. There are certain truths or principles which come up in the consideration of almost all topics, when the attempt is made to present any of them in the light of New-Church doctrine. Much of this repetition might have been avoided by altering the papers for that purpose; but it was thought best to publish them as they were written. I need not specify other imperfections, some of which are only too obvious. If they help any reader in any way, or if they send him or her to find in Swedenborg more or better light, my purpose in publishing them will be accomplished.

T. P

CAMBRIDGE, 1879.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE MYSTERY OF LIFE	5
TRUST	45
SACRIFICE	60
THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS	74
SUFFERING	98
TEMPTATION	108
FALSE WITNESS	169
THE DISCOURSES OF OUR LORD	175
THE CHERUBIM	307

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE.

WE are told by Swedenborg that the members of the earliest or most ancient Church thought with angels, and as they thought. The records of that thought, if there were any, have not come down to us, unless as they are concealed within the literal sense of the first chapters of Genesis (which Swedenborg informs us do not state literal truth, and were taken from an earlier Scripture), or in the fragmentary and misshapen traditions on which the old mythologies were formed. But from the beginning of recorded thought, we have evidence that the mysteries of life pressed heavily on minds capable of thinking above the sensuous plane. The questions, Whence are we, and whither do we go; What was the creating and what is the governing power of the universe; Why does evil so mingle with all its good, and which of the two is prevalent; What is it which so surely baffles, not only our thoughts when they seek to penetrate into the nature of things, but our efforts after happiness; and, in a word, Whence come the

clouds, the thick, heavy, and impenetrable clouds, which rest upon our origin and our destiny, — these questions have suggested themselves from the beginning, in all ages, and never more constantly or more oppressively than in the present age.

And how have these questions been answered? By innumerable theories, which in their boundless diversity represent all the peculiarities of human character, and all the qualities and tendencies of human thought. It is however possible to arrange all these theories into a few classes. One of them makes *chance* the God of the universe. In many ways and under many disguises of the same thought, it holds that the world came into being by the fortuitous impact, intercourse, and interaction of its primal elements or atoms, and is governed by laws, if they be laws, which themselves originated in chance, and of which chance is still the supreme director.

Against this sovereignty of chance, human reason, even in its lowest states, offers objections which to one who thinks soon become insuperable. Hence there arose innumerable theories as to the creation and government of the world by something which is not chance. Thus the Epicurean theory, that there were Gods who created the universe, but who repose in the inaccessible heights of their own heavens, seldom caring for this lower earth, or interfering with the action of its laws and forces.

There was then the theory which the Gnostics developed into many forms, — that the Supreme God, as inaccessible to thought as to sight or touch, formed by emanation from himself hosts of subordinate beings, varying in rank, in character, and in functions, who divided among them the creation, care, and control of the universe.

Then there was the theory which ripened into Manicheism, and which also took on different forms, agreeing only in this, — that there were two creative and governing principles, one good and the other evil, which meet and mingle in all the forms and activities of Nature and all the affairs of this world, always in conflict, sometimes the one and sometimes the other prevailing.

And finally there was the common belief among the multitudes, who without thought or inquiry believed as they were trained to believe, in the numerous Gods of the heathen mythologies, whom they sought to propitiate by worship and sacrifice.

These were answers which the natural man, or mind, could make and did make to questions which the mysteries of life suggested. And all the way along, the Divine Providence, as it led man slowly on an ascending path, gave glimpses of higher, that is of spiritual, truth. But they were only glimpses of truth, which variously modified the falsities with which they mingled. And the remains of the

literature of the ages nearest to the coming of Christianity, place in strong light the universal discontent with the answers which either philosophy or religion could make to these questions. We regard the different theories or systems above mentioned as only formulated developments of the thoughts or fancies which are suggested to even unthinking minds, when they pause amid the burdens of life to ask why things are as they are, and can find no better solution than was possible before the truths of Christianity were given. Such minds hold these views loosely and perhaps unconsciously; but thinking men carry them out and formulate them in various ways, and then they are known and commented upon as systems of thought. We shall presently see how similar theories or ways of thinking have again become prevalent, now that Christian truth has become so dim.

When our Lord came upon earth, the Roman empire comprised nearly the whole of the civilized world, and nearly all that part of the continents then known that was to become Christendom. And the rapid growth of the Christian Church in this empire, in defiance of the greatest difficulties and the strongest opposition, is itself one of the greatest wonders in the history of mankind. A wonder to be explained, in the first place, only by a recognition of the Divine power which went forth with the apostles

and their successors, and made their preaching effectual. But, humanly speaking, among the causes and influences which promoted the spread of Christian truth, we must place in the foremost rank the new answers which this new truth gave to the questions then pressing upon the human mind and heart throughout that vast empire.

It may be well to look for a moment at the condition of that empire at that period, that we may better appreciate the greatness of this wonder. It would indeed be difficult, not to say impossible, to imagine a system of religious truth more distinctly or more powerfully opposed to the Roman mind than the Christian religion was, both in its facts and in its doctrines. We need not resort to speculation or inference to prove this opposition, for enough of ancient literature has come down to us to make it certain. The more this is considered, the more wonderful will it seem that Christianity could prevail so soon and so completely against the religious and political institutions of the Roman empire. And, if we do not mistake, it will be seen that one cause of this victory may be found in the answers which Christianity gave to the universal questioning of the heathen mind and heart.

To the heathen nations the Christians were, in the first place, atheists. The great body of those nations were, we may say, extremely superstitious;

but, however we call it, they were devoted worshippers of their Gods. It was a worship at least as much of fear as of love or hope; but it was at all events earnest. There was abundant evidence of this in their magnificent temples, with their costly service, their large and frequent sacrifices, and the numerous and expensive staff of priests of various orders. The Roman religion was closely interwoven with all the institutions of the empire, civil or military. It was much more than a mere fashion which drove them to their temples whenever calamity came or impended, there to avert the anger or win the favor of their Gods by costly sacrifices. The belief was almost universal among all but the few who called themselves philosophers, and was powerful with some of them, that the safety of the empire depended upon the favor of those Gods who had built it up from small beginnings to its towering height of universal supremacy.

And how did the Christians regard these Gods? With contempt and hatred, either denying their existence, or proclaiming them to be devils, filled with all iniquity, and working only destruction. It was natural, therefore, that when any public calamity — defeat in battle, an earthquake, a pestilence, or a flood — occurred, the cry went up from the people, "The Christians to the lions!" for it was a common punishment to expose them to wild beasts

in the arena. "Down with the atheists!" was the yell of the mob which greeted the aged Polycarp at Smyrna, when he joined an assemblage of the people in the year 156; and it was his death warrant, for he was immediately seized and executed. So early as in the 63d year of our era, but two years after Paul's arrival at Rome, and when a Christian community had existed in that city but a short time, more than half of the city was destroyed by a great fire, and the Emperor Nero endeavored to avert suspicion from himself by turning it upon the Christians. This he was able to do by the detestation in which they were held. Many were punished with savage cruelty, with not a particle of proof of guilt beyond the fact that they were Christians. Tacitus shows distinctly what was commonly thought about them. He was the most profound, keen-sighted, and accurate of the Roman historians. He knew nothing of the Christians but from public report, which he fully accepted. He did not believe they were guilty of the crime of incendiarism, of which they were accused, but says that Nero "selected this sect, to whom the people gave the name of Christians, who were universally hated for their shameful misdeeds. . . . The founder of this sect, named Christ, had been executed under Tiberius by Pontius Pilate the Procurator. The shocking superstition was thereby checked for a time; but the

infection soon spread again, not only throughout Judea, where the disease was indigenous, but also in the capital, where all that is disgraceful and reprobate collects and finds favor. . . . They certainly cannot be convicted of causing the fire, but, of being enemies of the human race, they can."

We will not follow the history of the first ages of Christianity into further detail. It is enough to say that the followers of Christ were not regarded as atheists only. The whole frame of government and of military service rested upon the religion of the State and the solemn oaths which all who had any public employment were required to take; and therefore they who reviled this religion and despised these Gods, and taught that all worship of them was a sin, were of necessity regarded as rebels and as enemies of the State, and as preachers of rebellion. Hence it was that the persecutions they suffered were more often inflicted by good emperors, some of whom were, so far as we can judge, among the best and wisest of men, than by the bad emperors, some of whom were monsters of iniquity.

Christians avoided all contact with non-Christian society, all military service or public employment, settled their disagreements without resort to the courts, and took no part in public festivals or rejoicings. They were therefore regarded as forming a secret community, which was in fact a conspiracy

against established order. Their worship was secret, and they were believed to indulge in the most hideous and unmentionable vices in their nocturnal assemblies. As the sect grew, it was at first composed mainly of the poor, of slaves or freedmen, and other despised classes. And they were thought to worship as their God a Jew of Palestine, whom his compatriots had compelled the Roman governor to put to the ignominious death of crucifixion, as a malefactor.

Here then were a handful of persons, most of them of the lowest and most powerless classes in the community, who were despised by those in the higher walks of life, considered and treated by the government as traitors and public enemies, and by the people at large held in almost universal execration. And yet this handful grew rapidly into a multitude, and in three centuries obtained the control of the government and the empire. How shall we account for this miracle? First, we must look to the Divine assistance. Then the answer must be, that this new religion supplied that for which the human mind, and still more the human heart, were hungry: at first, certainly, the heart rather than the head. The earliest receivers of Christian doctrine were not cultivated men. They knew probably nothing of the systems of thought above referred to, which were then contending for ascendancy

all around them. Even their indirect influence could not have reached them in any considerable measure. But these systems were little more than developments into shape and order of the suggestions which the natural mind makes to all who are heavily burdened by the mysteries of life; and these suggestions, whether floating loosely through the mind, or formulated into systems of thought, were wholly insufficient to give relief or comfort or hope, because they were wholly natural. The world was full of suffering men. The human instinct made them look up to Heaven for some explanation of the world-wide trouble, or some hope to lighten their despair. But the religions within their reach showed them nothing there in which they could trust. The new religion gave them God; a God in whom they could believe, who was to them a Father, whom they could trust utterly, sure that He cared for them with perfect love, and wisdom, and power. They were suffering men, and they saw no relief, no hope, anywhere; nothing in the old religions which could strengthen them to bear, or comfort them with the assurance that suffering might be to them the path to happiness. And those of them who were inquiring men found no answers to the questions which the mystery and the misery of this life alike suggested. To them the new religion gave the answers for which they hungered. It revealed another life,

an unending life. It brought to them the conviction that the present life was but a preparation for that life; that this preparation was made through sorrow, and then they welcomed pain and suffering; that they lived here not to be happy, but to become capable of happiness; and as it opened another world to the unclouded vision of faith, it helped them to look beyond the clouds and darkness, the storm and fire of earth. They were low, prostrate beneath the feet of other men, and the idea of human brotherhood was perfectly unknown. What a revelation must that religion have been to them, which declared that all the children of God were brothers and sisters, equally the objects of His love, and sure of all the happiness His love could give them if they would accept it at His hand!

The evidence is plenary and complete, that these truths, which helped so much to solve the mysteries and assuage the miseries of life, entered into the hearts of the primitive Christians, were profoundly believed by them and governed their lives. On the first point, — a belief in the God whom Christianity revealed to them, — we know that neither pain nor peril nor death itself could induce them to deny Him, or abate one particle of the worship which they thought due to Him, or engage in the slightest act of worship of the false Gods whom they had renounced. How many died because they would not!

On the next point, — their belief in another life and in the happiness with which it repaid faith in their Saviour and constancy in goodness here, — we know that this belief not only took away all fear of death, but made them welcome death, and sometimes seek it unwisely. Their teachers found it necessary to prevent their belief in another life from making them seek the happiness of martyrdom. They endured the painful deaths inflicted upon them as if insensible to their agonies. It was one of the accusations brought against them, that they met death, not with patience and fortitude as wise men should, but with willing welcome, as only madmen could.

As to the third point, — their recognition of the brotherhood of man, — we know that this was actual and earnest. Sedulously they cared for the poor, the sick, and suffering. They who hated them would join in the cry, "See how these Christians love each other!" It was one of the charges brought against them, that in their religious assemblies the slave — who in Rome was only a thing and not a person — sat beside his owner on terms of perfect equality. In one instance, if the early history of the Church can be relied upon, a slave was made free and rose to become Bishop of Rome. Thus the new religion answered the questions which suffering and despairing humanity asked concerning the mysteries of life, and thus it assuaged the miseries

of life by that best blessing, a distinct, earnest, and living Hope.

Such is a general sketch of the early history of Christianity ; and the whole story is repeating itself in these days in new forms and under a new aspect. The mystery of life is now urging upon all thinking minds the same questions as in those days, and lays the same burden upon hearts that can feel. And the New Church has come to answer these questions and lift these burdens. It has come to do this now by the same truths by which the first Christian Church did this work before. The same truths and no other. But the new Christianity reveals them with a fulness, a clearness and breadth of view, and a wealth of consequences, which the first Christian Church never knew. Every one of these truths is now given, but not as a simple, undeveloped truth, which could be moulded into a creed that would contain it all, but as a living organism ; as a seed invested with a power of unlimited and unending development ; as a principle at once of life and of thought, of knowledge concerning God and man, time and eternity, which is to grow for evermore.

The New Church has come to explain to men the mystery of life. It finds prevailing among men the same falsities now suggested by this mystery, as in the olden time ; for the natural mind, unaided by

spiritual light, seeks to answer these oppressive questions in the same way to-day as it did in earlier ages; in the same way as before to those who do not so much think over these difficulties consciously as feel them acutely, and also to those more cultivated or thoughtful minds which seek for intellectual satisfaction in theories and systems. These answers are now as they were then made by the natural mind, and now as then they are therefore falsities. These falsities are no longer systematized and held professedly and under the same names, by different schools of thinking men, but they exert the same power.

Thus, there are none now who build up a scheme which attributes to chance the existence and government of the universe. But this dark and dismal falsity retains its hold upon human thought, and has an influence upon all persons of which we are for the most part unconscious. Every one who does not believe, firmly and fully, that all things were created and are still governed by a thinking, willing, personal God, must believe that chance takes the place of God or comes in to supplement His power and action. Let us look into our own thoughts and feelings, and shall we not discover how often we fear that this evil, or hope that this good, will be brought to us by the chances of life; how we weigh and compute these chances, or, as we call them, probabilities; and if we are hopeful we trust to

them, and if we are timid and cautious carefully provide against them. But is it not right to examine into probabilities, and provide for them; and may not this be consistent with the firmest belief in a controlling God? Certainly it may; and it is so when through all the vicissitudes of life we look to Him with unfailing confidence, grateful for whatever good comes as for His gift, and, if disaster impends, sure it will not fall upon us unless it can be made a blessing by our rightful use of it. If the anticipation of the future forgets Divine Providence, and the dread of or reliance upon chance is distinctly seen by one who claims or seeks to have any religious faith, he strives to remember the Providence of God, and to drive this thought of chance away. But it is a most insidious falsity, and watches for opportunities to enter the mind when faith slumbers or faints; and it finds such opportunities too often. A belief in chance and a belief in Divine Providence are precisely opposite. They are perfectly antagonistic, and so far as either is held the other cannot be; and so far as either is not held the other must be. So far as there is a belief in the Providential government of the world, there is no room for a belief in chance; and so far as a belief in chance comes in, the belief in Providence must be weak or wanting; for chance and Providence are mutually exclusive, and together cover the whole ground.

But the idea of a Providential government by an omniscient omnipotence easily degenerates into fatalism, and a belief in the control of human life and human affairs which is destructive of personal freedom and responsibility. The natural mind easily asks, What have we to do for ourselves, when God does what He will for us, to us, with us? Hence it is permitted that the idea of chance should have much power, and that of Providence be feeble and uncertain, until the mind is so far elevated and instructed as to be capable of rationally receiving the truth that the Divine Providence — which counts the hairs of our heads, and without which no sparrow falls to the ground — always, as far as man is concerned, gives and preserves human freedom, and acts through that freedom.

So there are none who now maintain the doctrine that there are Gods who, like Jupiter and the hosts of Olympus, sit in perfect quietude upon their thrones and let this world take care of itself, and know nothing of its inhabitants or their concerns. But how much does this doctrine differ from the common opinion, that God made the universe and impressed upon it general laws by which it is governed; but that He cannot be supposed to descend and watch with specific and especial care over all the events, the hours and the minutes which make up each human life. And is not the agnosticism

which is becoming fashionable a correlative falsity? Agnosticism holds that God, the Infinite, is and must be wholly unknown to and unknowable by man, the finite. We only present one or the other side of the falsity, — that God and man are too far apart for definite relations to exist between them, — whether we say with them of old that God has no knowledge of men, or, in modern phrase, that man has and can have no knowledge of God.

So, too, there are none who call themselves Manicheans. There is no school of philosophers who give systematic form and development to the theory that there are two creative and controlling powers, one good and the other evil; both of which were active in making the universe what it is, one contributing all it has of beauty and beneficence, while the other caused whatever there is in it of disorder, disturbance, and cruelty; and that these two meet and mingle in all of Nature and in all the on-goings of human life. But are there none who think or feel that God is either of imperfect goodness, or that His power is resisted and sometimes controlled by something of a different and opposing character? If I am able to do justice to important language in the latest writings of Mill, who has exerted more influence among a certain class of minds than any other philosopher, he holds that there is probably a God, who is in some sort the cause and governor

of the universe; but if the goodness of God be not itself imperfect, it must be controlled and modified, or neutralized, by some adverse influence which He cannot control. The mass of men are not philosophers nor students of philosophy, nor do they think out their thoughts into shape and expression. This thought may not clothe itself in words, nor come clearly before the consciousness. But when clouds fill and darken the sky, and the storms of life rage, and calamities strike as the lightning might, who is there that in such hours of sharp distress is not tempted to feel that God has forgotten to be merciful, or that something that is not God is let loose to do its cruel work? Who is there whose undisturbed faith gives him the serenity of perfect peace amid the tempest?

It is not meant that these fantasies which ascribe the creation and government of the world to chance, or account for it otherwise in the ways already described, are elaborated into definite belief with the vast majority of persons. As feelings rather than as thoughts they affect the masses of the people. But they belong to human nature; and as long and as far as that nature is not born again into the perception of spiritual truth, the mystery in which human life is involved presses upon all minds with great and sometimes with overwhelming weight, and often suggests such falsities as these.

The condition of mankind was such at the coming of our Lord, that feelings of this kind were then causing universal unrest. The truths, which encounter these falsities and bring relief to minds which they oppress, are few and simple. They are, — that there is a God who is our Father in the heavens; that there is another and an unending life; that the present life is only preparatory for that; and that a merciful Providence governs all the issues of this life, to the end that all who accept His mercies and obey His commands shall find in that life infinite compensation for the sufferings of this life. These truths found in that age a world waiting for them, needing them, and in a good measure ready for them; and therefore it was that the few who received them in its beginning, as the teaching of Christianity, grew so rapidly into many. Again, the same wants are met with the same truths. Let us now see what new aspects these old truths — concerning God, another life, and the relation of this life to that life — have in the theology of the New Church. For our Lord has come again, as He promised that He would come, in the clouds of heaven, filling them with light. What are the clouds of heaven, and when and how did our Lord come in them? We are now taught that the Word of God is the expression of His wisdom. Up, even in the highest heaven, it is a

lamp unto the feet and a light upon the path of the angels there. That it may be so, it is accommodated to their capacities, which far transcend all that men can imagine while they are on earth. It descends to the lower and the lowest heavens, everywhere accommodated to the capacities of those to whom it is given. Then it comes down to earth. Here also it is accommodated to the capacities of those to whom it is given. This is effected by the correspondence between things spiritual and things natural, whereby the whole spiritual and divine truth, which gives light to all the heavens, gives light to men on earth through the lowest or literal sense. This literal sense clouds the spiritual senses which lie within it, and thus makes it possible for man to receive in this way truths which, if they shone upon him with undimmed radiance, would blind him with excess of light. This literal sense is repeatedly meant in the Scriptures by the clouds of heaven. In these clouds the Lord has come by a revelation of the fact and the laws of this correspondence. Hereafter, in all time, men may read His Word in its spiritual meaning with ever growing intelligence, and find new light for their rising and expanding intellects, and see Him in His Word, which in its spiritual sense treats only of Him and His Providences, more and more clearly evermore.

Upon the Word of God all the instruction of the

New Church is founded. The same truths are taught now that were taught in the first Christian ages. But not now in the form of general statement. They are divine truths, and something of their infinitude is now revealed. They come down from God himself, through His heavens; and now the means are given to all who make a rightful use of them, of following their upward steps towards Himself. We may now see them in the laws of His Providence, which are impressed upon all being, whether of mind or matter; and all created things bear witness to them. The reception of the new truths which illustrate the old truths must needs be very slow, gradual, and imperfect: now, at the beginning, very imperfect; and yet an effort to exhibit somewhat of the glory which now surrounds these old truths and radiates from them, may not be presumptuous nor wholly ineffectual.

Let us first look at the idea of God. In all religions He is held to be the creator and the cause of all things. But we are now taught that He is the *source* of all things; not merely as having created them by His will and power, but as being the source of the stream of life, which is constant, continuous, and ever-flowing from Him. He is a divine man; and man is man because he alone of all created things is formed by this inflowing life of God into the image and likeness of God. Ages ago, God

declared in His Word that man was created in "His image and after His likeness." Now we are taught what these words mean. God is love and wisdom; perfect and infinite love and wisdom. Man consists of will and understanding. His will is formed to be a receptacle of Divine love; not merely the *object* of it, but the *receptacle* of it; and his understanding is formed to be a receptacle of wisdom. In the words of Swedenborg, "Two receptacles and habitations for Himself have been created and formed by the Lord in man; the will for His Divine love, and the understanding for His Divine wisdom." This is to the end that into man's will the Divine love may flow, and become in it all he has of love, affection, or motive power; and into his understanding the Divine wisdom may flow, and become in it all he has of thought, mental power, or directive force. Thus man lives by receiving into himself the Divine life, and is so created that this life in him is what it is in its source, differing only as it is there infinite and perfect; but in its human derivation it is finite, modified by man's use or abuse of his rationality and freedom, and therefore most imperfect. It is thus that the love and wisdom of God become the love and wisdom of man; and thereby is he builded into the *image* of God.

God is, and lives, of Himself; and man is made after the likeness of God, because life is given to

him to be his own, and he is made to live as of himself. To repeat this, — God lives of Himself, and man is in the likeness of God because he lives as of himself. All his life is God's life in him; and yet he is not a smaller God, nor a piece of God. He is made to be himself, and perfectly distinct from God, while living only by the constant influx of life from God; and that he may be so distinct the Divine life flowing into man is given him as his own: is *given* to him, but is given him to be his own; it becomes by this gift most actually his own life, and *therefore* he is himself. His thoughts, his feelings, and his acts are all his own, while they are the effects and activities of a life which flows into him incessantly from God. God is infinitely Himself; and man is made after the *likeness* of God by being made to be himself, with entire freedom and self-determining power, which is none the less but all the more because it is given to him, — for it is given him by perfect love, which gives wholly. Through eternity he feels with ever-growing strength of feeling that he is himself, and that his life is his own.

He cannot avoid having this feeling, because it belongs to him as man, and is an inseparable element of his human nature, and the foundation of all his individuality. But, as he rises into spiritual knowledge, the first element of this spiritual knowledge

is that his life is not his own in the sense of self-originating or independent being, but is his own only because it is given to him to be his own; and that every thought, every feeling, and every act, and even the minutest portion of his life, is of the life that comes to him from God, and is his only by a perpetual influx from its Divine source.

But any words concerning God would be fatally defective as an exposition of the theology of the New Church, if it did not include distinct mention of what is called in that theology the Doctrine of the Lord. This teaches us that our Father in heaven — who from the beginning was in the constant effort to assist man to overcome his spiritual enemies and walk in the way of life — in the fulness of time completed the redemption of men, by assuming their human nature in the Virgin Mary, and being born, living, and dying as a man. By his temptations, symbolically represented in the temptations in the wilderness, and faintly exhibited in the Gospel story of the constant suffering of His human life and of the agonies in Gethsemane and on the cross, He combated and conquered all the spirits of evil who continually inspire evil into the human heart (for all His temptations were conflicts with them), and by His victories reduced them permanently into such a condition, that thereafter, for ever, men can never be tempted beyond their power of resistance.

These evil spirits are still permitted to awaken men's tendencies to evil and bring them to his consciousness, that he may know what he is, resist and overcome the evil that is in him; or, if he fall before it, by repentance and reformation permit a new heart to be formed within him. This is their use, and it is indispensable to man's salvation. But never more can they gain such possession of men as will paralyze their power of resistance. For men are now redeemed, — delivered from slavery, made free to work out their own salvation; for He, their Redeemer, can now work within them of His own will and pleasure, without lessening or obstructing their freedom. His enemies and their enemies were, by his victories over them, finally and for ever subdued, and can never exert any influence upon man which may not, if he so wills, help forward his regeneration. From this statement it follows that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is Jehovah Himself, one with Him in essence and in person. In this truth it is that the New Church completes and consummates its instruction concerning God and His relation to man. With the first dawning of spiritual light upon the soul, there comes a desire to know God, and so to know Him that He may become a definite object of worship and of love. Before the coming of our Lord, all mankind, wherever there was any religion, had some idea of

God as a divine man. But this idea was undefined and indistinct, and was connected with all manner of falsities. To give to this idea something of definiteness, idols were made use of. At first they were regarded only as representatives of God, and used only to lead the thoughts to God. But they became at length, to most minds, substitutes for God. Thus to the Hebrews was given a dispensation in which the unity of God was enforced, and guarded from idolatry in every conceivable way; but still ineffectually. Then God revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, who by His miracles proved His possession of divine power, and in the instruction which He gave exhibited divine wisdom, and who declared Himself to be one with the Father. To the earliest Christians, and for some succeeding generations, this was enough. But falsities soon began to obscure and distort the truth, and there grew up a system of faith which declared our Lord to be a different person from the Father, and saved His divinity as well as it could by declaring also that He was one with the Father in essence. This belief could not be a distinct intellectual belief, for the human mind can form no conception of a being that is at once three persons and one person, and no belief in the unity of God at the same time with the belief that He is three persons. Hence, with simple-minded and religious Christians our Lord

has always been God, all the God they had or could think of. They who strove in different ways to reason out the theory lost themselves in clouds, which at length covered the whole sky; and to-day unbelief is rampant under the guise of a rationalism aptly symbolized by the mythological Proteus, who assumed all manner of diverse forms, by which he always baffled the efforts of any who would lay hold of him.

But this mystery of the Godhead is now solved for all men and all time. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has at His second coming revealed Himself fully. He has shown by the truth He has given to this Church, that He is one with the Father in essence and in person. In this there is a trinity as there is in every man, because man is in the image and likeness of God. For in every man there is his love, which is the inmost principle and the motive force of his life; there is wisdom or intellectual power; and there is the activity of the love through the thought, causing all action: and in this action both the love and the wisdom are clothed and ultimated. Love, wisdom, and action, or operation; affection, thought, and action: to these three the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit correspond. Or again, we find this trinity in man in the soul, the body (the natural body here, the spiritual hereafter), and the action of the soul through the body.

Or yet again, in the will, the thought born of the will, and the action produced by the will through the thought in which both are clothed; and everywhere in the universe, which is from God and is His mirror, this trinity is found as the end, the cause, and the effect: the end, for which a thing is and without which it could not be; the cause, by means of which it is; and the effect, or the thing itself, within which are the end and the cause. Not in despite of, but because of this universal trinity, a man is not three persons, but one man, himself; one being, one person, one object of affection and of thought. So is our Lord and Saviour God. We may think of the infinite and all-producing love, and call it the Father; but by Himself He is as inaccessible to thought as He is to sight and to touch. We may think of His infinite wisdom; but we can think of it only as His wisdom, or that of an infinite and yet personal God. We may think of the going forth of His power as producing and sustaining the universe; but we can think of it only as the activity in which His love and His wisdom clothe themselves. And when we say that every act of God is infinitely wise and good, this is what we mean. And let us remember that in eternity there is no room for time. We should not look upon our Lord's life and work on earth as an episode in the life of the Infinite, which began and ended. So it is in the natural

view of the finite creature to whom time belongs. But in the counsels and providences of the Infinite it has no beginning and has no end. As far as we are able to grasp a truth so vast, we must regard His life on earth as "a symbol and a sample" of what divine life is doing, and until time shall be no more will ever be doing, in and for our human nature.

If we so think of our Lord, Jesus Christ stands before our thought with perfect distinctness as our God; as God with us, — a divine man, an infinite God. A man, entirely apprehensible by thought and affection, and yet infinite in love, in wisdom, and in power; towards whom may rise and in whom may centre every emotion and every thought concerning God, — all love, all worship, all prayer, all obedience, faith, and trust.

Thus, we repeat, is the mystery of the Godhead now revealed.

Let us now consider the theory of another life. Christianity gave assurance that there was one, and that it was retributive and compensatory. It taught that not only martyrs who suffered for the truth, but all who obeyed the truth, should find in that life rest from their labors, and abounding compensation for all the ills of this life, — want, oppression, danger, and fear, — some or all of which were then abiding guests in every household.

Truths like these brought comfort and hope, and gladly were they received. The faith of the early Christians rested firmly on our Lord's resurrection, His words, and His works; and it kindled in their hearts a love for Him and a trust in Him which encountered all persecution, all danger, and all suffering, with triumphant defiance.

Then, now, and always, the profounder questions of what may be called philosophy do not suggest themselves to the mass of mankind so often or with so much force, if indeed they occur at all, as those questions which arise from the inequalities and diversities of human condition. Wealth and poverty, sometimes immense wealth and painful poverty, sickness and health, eminent greatness and common mediocrity, or a condition below that of mediocrity,—all these are within the daily view of all men. To him who suffers from poverty, or sickness, or from anxiety about them, or is discontented with his humble position, the question will come and urgently too, Why is this? Why do some possess so much while I am destitute? Why have they health and strength while I am bowed down with pain, sickness, and infirmity? Why are they placed where they look down on me, and I must look up to them? What better right have they to all these advantages than I have?

There are probably no persons whatever to whom

such questions as these do not suggest themselves, and sometimes very painfully. All such questions the New Church answers. Whatever Christianity has heretofore taught concerning the compensation which another life offers, it repeats, and with a new emphasis. But it goes much farther. It discloses what the grounds and nature of the happiness of an unending life must be. It shows most clearly that we cannot acquire a character susceptible of that happiness except by a gradual but fundamental change of heart; that is, a change in our ruling loves, in our desires and purposes, in our habits of thought, of feeling, and of living. It enables us to see that suffering, humiliation, and suppression of what belongs to us as our natural inheritance are needed, that this change be made; that self-love and self-life in all their forms may be subdued, and the love of our Father in heaven and of our neighbor on earth may take their place; that we may cease to be earthly and natural, and become heavenly and spiritual. It enables us to see that, in the wise words of Lord Bacon, "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, and adversity of the New Testament; and to understand why it is so." It teaches us that Divine Providence is constantly helping us to form a heavenly character if we will, and as a means for this makes use of the various tribulations of life; and that there

are none who escape entirely from these chastisements, because "whom He loves He chastens," and there are none whom He does not love and care for. The truths revealed to this Church teach us that all of these varied instruments of good are perfectly adjusted, by a wisdom which cannot err, to the spiritual needs of every man in every hour in which infinite mercy makes use of them for our good. More even than this. As our faith in this divine and infinite mercy grows, it opens our blind eyes, and we see — at first perhaps very dimly, but with ever increasing clearness — in what way it is that the misfortunes and distresses which the Lord permits, help us against our spiritual enemies. Thus, life is lifted from the dust. Hope comes with present consolation and the promise of peace. We are not only able to know that the sufferings and disappointments of this life are blessings in disguise, but to see in what way they are so. The clouds and darkness about His throne are pierced by the light of love. This life is transfigured. Instead of the abode of imperfect and uncertain enjoyment mingled with gloom and sorrow, which the most thoughtful might think it to be, and the most sensitive feel it to be, it becomes the pathway, — sometimes thorny, difficult, and wearisome, but the sure pathway, if we will have it so, — to everlasting happiness.

The New Church accepts all truths heretofore given, and holds them with the firmest grasp. It also gives the grounds of these truths, and exhibits their harmony with all the facts of Nature, and all the laws of existence whether material or spiritual. It tells what the body is to the soul, and what the soul is to the body. It not only says, but shows, that death is only a step forward in life. It discloses the correspondence between the higher world of spirit and the lower world of matter. It shows that this is a correspondence between causes and effects: whatsoever there is in the spirit-world or the world of causes, producing in this world, which is the world of effects, that which corresponds to its cause. Thus it gives significance to the things of this lower world, because they correspond to, represent, and exhibit in natural forms their spiritual causes. And thus it opens the Word of God; for this word He spake, and speaks, to all His rational creatures, — to all in the heavens in spiritual forms, and to men on earth in the natural forms which correspond to the spiritual forms in which angels read His Word. By the possession of this science of correspondence, the New Church has a key to the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and will gradually, as the ages roll on, learn to read the Word of God even as angels read it.

And thus this Church has an invincible defence

for the Word. Through all the ages of Christianity it has been protected by a profound sense of its sanctity, which refused to listen to the objections of a merely natural criticism. But this sense is now feeble, and has left this Holy Book open to the assaults of learned and ingenious naturalism. These assaults are all founded on the assumption that this book is like other books, and open in all respects to similar treatment. Nor could there be any adequate defence against them, if the ground on which they rested were not taken away. Now it is taken away. The humblest student of Scripture, aided by the most general knowledge of this correspondence, sees that he is reading a book which man never wrote from his own mind, and which teaches him the wisdom of God, accommodated by the mercy of God to his needs and his capacities.

In all ages, they who have believed that there was another life have believed that it was, in some way, retributive; and this belief has always been useful. Christianity, at its beginning, asserted this truth in the most emphatic manner, and it took complete possession of the minds of the early believers. This faith in another life was not an intellectual faith. It yielded itself without reserve and without question to trust in God. As the centuries passed, it gradually faded away until it

is now feeble and obscure. But now light from heaven shines upon earth, and reveals the laws of heaven. Not only is the fact of another life asserted, but its laws and phenomena are disclosed, and some of its appearances and occurrences are given in such wise, that, so far as our minds can rise above the controlling influence of space and time and Nature, we may understand wherein spiritual life resembles and wherein it differs from life in this world; and thus acquire distinct and accurate ideas of the home which we inhabit after we leave the dead body. We learn now that character determines our condition in the spiritual world; not only in general, but in every the minutest particular. The Lord gives to us and preserves our spiritual freedom; and therefore our character, and with it our destiny, are in our own hands. His infinite love is in the constant effort to lead us to choose good rather than evil, happiness rather than unhappiness; but the choice is still with us, and still must be our choice. Sure may we be, with perfect, utter certainty, that all the events of life are guided to this end, but never in such wise as to compel us to be what we do not choose to be. Over all a Providence is watching, which is only perfect love and perfect wisdom in action.

Thus is the mystery of life at length unveiled. Clouds and darkness are round about His throne,

and will be as long as they are exhaled from the naturalness and perversities of our own hearts. One law will never pass away: it is, that exactly in proportion to our unregenerateness shall we be unable to see His love and His wisdom in His Providence. If we yield to the divine purpose and effort, and permit the work of regeneration to be done in us, and learn to love our Father in heaven, we shall find that "love giveth insight." We shall see more and more plainly in the events of life the end for which they are permitted. The tangled circumstances of our pilgrimage will become intelligible. We shall see why each one was permitted; because we shall discern, more or less clearly, the wrongful act it rebukes, the wrongful affection and desire it resists and disappoints, the wrongful tendency or habit it encounters and would help us to suppress. This knowledge of the divine purposes must needs be partial; ever growing, but in this life always incomplete. There will still be much that will only serve to exercise, and by exercise to strengthen, our faith in that Divine Providence we have begun to believe in and to trust. Day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, will succeed each other all the days of our life.

The substance of what I have attempted to say may be stated thus: The human race began as each individual begins, in a purely natural condition,

knowing nothing of, and therefore caring nothing for, any thing but this life, until something was taught them concerning spiritual life. As soon as the rational faculty, which distinguishes man from other animals, awoke, what it saw in the outside world and in the mind suggested questions concerning creation, life, and death, the soul, its nature, origin, and destiny. These questions, as the race advances, continue to be the same in substance though varying in form. To these questions the natural mind makes such answers as it can; and these answers are in substance the same, although as the race rises in intelligence they too rise in shape, in distinctness, and in systematic form. The answers which spiritual truth gives to these questions are also the same in substance but not in form. These answers are always adapted to men's capacities of reception; and therefore they are at first the merest glimpses of truth, lifting the mind but little if at all above the earth. A succession of churches exists from the divine mercy among men, and are the main instruments for their improvement. Through them spiritual truth is given, always adapted to the needs and capacities of men, and therefore limited and clouded; and always given to their freedom, and therefore liable to perversion, abuse, and loss.

While the mass of mankind was still in a condition

but little above that of animals, perhaps neither asking nor answering questions which concern the soul, a church—the most ancient church Swedenborg calls it—was formed among a portion of mankind, to which spiritual truth was given in a peculiar way. This church fell, as told symbolically in the fall of Adam; and among its descendants the truth faded away, and was preserved only in traditions which grew continually more dim and distorted. Then another church was formed among the descendants of Abraham, which was only the representative of a church, to whose comprehension little spiritual truth was given but the central truth of the existence and unity of God. But this truth was given in a Word which, however closed to them, is full of all spiritual truth. As the ages pass, surrounding nations advance in culture and in efforts to solve the mysteries of life by various systems of belief. But always these mysteries excite similar questions, and the answers are similar in substance, however they may differ from age to age in form and structure. The Jewish Church becomes more and more and more perverse, and a thicker darkness settles down upon the nations.

Then our Lord comes on earth, and Christianity is established. The Word of God is completed. All that the human mind could then bear was given to it. This truth shone like sunrise upon the

darkness of the world. But it was a morning dim with clouds; the truth revealed was still most imperfect, but on the suffering it fell like rain on the mown grass, and brought hope and consolation to the seething misery of mankind, and by its light and consolation conquered the world.

When our Lord walked on earth, He promised to come again. He has come, but in the spirit and not in the flesh. He has come in new spiritual truth, through a man who was such, and so instructed and assisted, that he could see and communicate this truth. Again it answers those questions which are as old as human thought. The answers it gives are the same in substance as spiritual truth always has given and always must give, to these questions. But they are so new in form and in distinctness, and above all in their capacity of unending and limitless development, that they are, in fact as well as in appearance, new truths.

To this Church our Lord is revealed as the one God of heaven and earth. His Word is opened; for He has broken the seals which no man could break. He has revealed through His servant, Emanuel Swedenborg, the principles of the correspondence between all things of the spiritual world and all things of the natural world. And thus has He come "in the clouds of heaven"—by which is meant the literal sense of Scripture—"with power

and great glory." As this correspondence is learned and intelligently applied, all the works of God will testify of Him, and will testify that He in His infinite wisdom is in His Word; and men will gradually learn to read His Word as angels read it. The laws of His Providence are revealed; and the darkness which covered the nations and enwrapped all the events of every life is giving way before a new morning. Far, far away in the distant future is the noon-day or even the unclouded morning of this Church. It is now humble and most imperfect, and in the wilderness to which the Apocalypse of St. John long ago declared that it would flee for refuge. Hereafter, a time will come when it will emerge from this wilderness; its truths will be learned and understood as they are not, perhaps cannot be, now; and they will have an influence on life which they have not now; and He who made the heavens and the earth will be able to build up a new heaven and a new earth.

TRUST.

ALL men trust in something; if in nothing else, all trust in the continued on-going of the course of Nature. All believe that the sun will rise to-morrow, and will rise upon a stable earth; that the revolving year will bring the seasons in their turn; and that alternate sunshine and rain will ripen the fruits of the garden and field. It is obvious that if this trust and faith were not universal mankind would gradually perish from the earth. Very few, indeed, ask themselves why they believe this, or could answer the question if it were asked. All they know is that it is so; and only one who was insane or foolish could doubt it.

But life is full of contingencies, where one thing or another may take place. The timid and anxious fear disaster in the same circumstances in which the bold and sanguine hope. Of course, all who do not sink into despair and inaction have some trust. What is it they trust in? The natural forms of trust are in chance, in man, in ourselves. The only spiritual trust is in God.

The first of these is so foolish that it can be the ground-work of the activity of life only with the weak-minded. But it enters into almost every life. Very few are professed gamblers and nothing else; and they are usually cheats, always trusting to their own skill and cunning under pretence of trusting to chance. This disposition, which makes some persons confirmed gamblers, seems almost universal in human nature; for there are very few who do not sometimes feel inclined "to try their luck." Perhaps all of us put our trust, at one time or another, in chance. Of the courses open to us, we know not certainly which promises the best results. So we weigh all the probabilities, and do what they seem to indicate; and then wait to see what the chances will bring forth, without a higher thought. This is silly enough with all, and especially silly with those who know that there is no such thing as chance. How can such persons ever trust to chance? Because their knowledge is mainly intellectual, and fails to protect them from the wiles of their spiritual enemies, who are sure to profit by every opportunity they can to obscure, for that time at least, any better faith which they may have. Such trust in chance may not be very wicked, but it is very foolish; and there is in it no comfort, nor assurance, nor strength.

We trust also in men, in their assistance and

co-operation. And we have a right to trust in this to some extent. It is the duty of all men to help each other; and most men, perhaps all, do help each other more or less. But our own failure to discharge fully all the duties which human brotherhood lays upon us, should teach us not to expect, as we certainly do not deserve, that others should do all their duty by us. Moreover, life is full of perils and misfortunes, in which human aid is wholly unavailing. Every man's experience tells him that trust in man gives neither peace nor strength.

Trust in ourselves is the most common trust. There may be some, who are so feeble that they have much less of it than others. But we are all inclined by nature to trust in ourselves, and we remain in this trust except so far as the Lord is able to lead us out of it. When merely natural, it stands in exact opposition to trust in God. These two form a test of character. So far as one trusts in himself alone, with no look to the Lord and no reference to Him, he is under influences from hell, and is building for himself a home in hell. So far as he has arisen from this low natural level, and learned to look to the Lord and trust in Him, just so far he is building up for himself a home in heaven; for the very light and life of heaven, and all its hope and happiness and strength, are from trust in Him.

An angel's trust in God is trust in One whom he knows as his Father, who he is sure loves him absolutely, and has perfect wisdom to discern and perfect power to do that which is best for him. It is not easy for us to imagine such a state of mind; but so far as we can do this, we may understand the blessedness of such a trust, and know why the Scriptures declare this so repeatedly. The following are a few of these many texts: "Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust." "How great is the goodness which thou hast laid up for them that trust in thee." "None of them that trust in thee shall be left desolate." "He shall deliver them and save them because they trust in Him." "Trust in the Lord and do good and verily thou shalt be fed." "Commit thy way unto the Lord and trust in Him, and He shall bring it to pass."

The Lord is love itself. It is of the essence of love to desire to give all that it has and is, — to give itself. It was from this desire that the Lord created men, and therefore created them such that He might give to them His own life. Because in His life is perfect freedom and absolute individuality, He so creates men that they may have freedom and individuality, each man being himself and whatever he chooses to make himself. Without this freedom and self-hood, men could not receive that divine life of which these are essential and

vital elements. But because men possess this selfhood and freedom and power over themselves, the Lord can bestow His best gifts upon them only through their wills, and only as He can make them willing to act with Him. That they may be led to this condition, or to form this character, is the end of the Divine Providence in all its dealings with men. And the natural forms of trust to which we are all inclined—as trust in the course of Nature, trust in man, and trust in self—are given to us that they may introduce us to, and may themselves rise into, trust in Him. If our trust becomes a trust in Him, it does not lose or renounce the lower and natural forms of trust, but it imparts to them a new life which is the life of heaven. Our trust in the course of Nature rests no longer upon mere habit, or a kind of instinctive belief that what has been will continue to be. Its foundation is the certainty that the God of Nature, who created it, infills it with Himself. He is love; and all the forces of Nature in all their forms and activities are only forms of love, alike on the largest scale when moving the suns and planets of the universe, and on the smaller and the smallest when grains of sand and drops of water obey them. They are always activities of love, tending always to the ultimate good of all His children. And then our trust in Nature becomes an abiding and undoubting

trust, that whatever occurs is seen by perfect wisdom to be the best thing which could occur for every one whom it reaches.

So, too, our trust in mankind rises. It is now founded upon the knowledge that all the children of our Heavenly Father are brethren; all moved by His inflowing spirit to love each other, so far as He is able to make them willing to receive this influence. Our trust in others is then one with our consciousness that they have a right to trust in us, and with our faith that the Lord will overrule their actions and our actions for the ultimate good of them, and of ourselves so far as we permit.

And even our trust in ourselves is vivified with a new life. It rests upon a conviction which never leaves us, that the life He gives us is given us to be our own; to make us ourselves. It makes our life one continuous effort to use that life in His service, and therefore in the service of our brethren, because that is the service He asks of us. And so far as that is the end before us in all our actions, we are sure that He will assist us even with His own omnipotence. Such a trust in ourselves has become a body, of which trust in God is the soul. It no longer draws us away from God. It does not lead us to think we need do nothing ourselves because He will act for us, and by this falsity lessen our activity and usefulness. It leads us to be as

active in usefulness as possible, knowing always that all our strength is His, given to us by Him, and the more and better use we make of it, the more will be given us.

Thus it is that these natural forms of trust are provided for us as means to lead us to the highest trust,—to trust in the Lord. This is the end which Divine Providence looks to in all the circumstances, conditions, and events of this life. It is the end for which we are created. The reason is, that trust in God is the one thing by means of which He is able to give us that happiness which He infinitely desires to give. It is very difficult to raise our thoughts so near to heaven that we can form any distinct idea of what life is there: not external life, for of that, aided by what Swedenborg has told us, we may form at least an imagination. But of the internal life of heaven, what can we think or say? Angels live constantly in His presence: not that they see Him personally, but that He is always before their thoughts; and in the sun of heaven they see more than His symbol and representative, for they know that it is the first form which He puts on as the instrument of universal blessing. In its light they see His wisdom; in its heat they feel His love; and in its constant action they see Him creating and preserving all things, even as we on this earth are able to recognize in the natural

sun the source and the sustainer of all natural existence. In the air and ethers which envelop them angels see an unfathomable ocean which He has created, that He might fill it with His spirit, and be near to every one, and even in contact with them at every moment of eternity; and at every one of these moments they feel that He is *in them*, with His love and light and blessing. Who can even imagine what must be their trust in Him, or what the happiness derived from this trust? This is the end for which we are created. Therefore, by the question whether we are approaching this end or going always farther from it, we may determine whether we approach heaven or are going away from it. All the natural means and instruments of good are subjected to our freedom, and we may make of them instruments of good or of evil as we choose. Therefore we may rest in our trust in Nature, or in ourselves. Then we close our hearts against the influences which would fill them with a better life, and thus exclude from us the life of heaven, and bar its gates against us.

So, too, if we have some trust in God, we may see what it is, — strong or weak, pure or mingled, constant or fluctuating, — and find in this one test of our nearness to or our distance from Him and heaven. Do we habitually look to our Father in heaven for guidance and support? When storms

assail us, and misfortune threatens or oppresses us, do we see through the clouds the sunshine of His love? And when they scatter, and the brightness of day returns, do we see, in the relief and in the good that comes to us, His gifts? And are we sure that He permits disaster and distress to fall upon us, only that by their effect upon our characters they may enable Him to give us the happiness it is His infinite desire to give?

It is not uncommon for those who are able to feel the support of some trust in the Lord for themselves, to be without this trust for others whom they love. Children or other relatives are dependent upon them. The end is drawing near, and the fear of leaving these dear ones without adequate provision torments them with anxieties. These anxieties really come from their mistaken belief that it was they who in their own strength supplied the necessities of those who were dependent on them. Let them remember that they could not have given them a garment or a loaf of bread, if their Father in heaven had not enabled them to do so. They may die, but that Father still lives, and His arm is not shortened or weakened because they die. The Father of the fatherless will count the hairs of their children's heads,—for they are His children too,—and be sure to keep them in comfort unless discomfort be better for them; and

will give them abundant means, unless want and poverty will best promote their eternal welfare. And will they as parents be cruel enough to wish their children happy for the brief moments of this life at the cost of their unending happiness hereafter? The feebleness of our trust in our Heavenly Father indicates, and in part arises from, our imperfect belief in another life. For, if our belief in that life were as distinct and definite and free from doubt as it should be with any one who has learned the truth revealed in the writings of Swedenborg, it would be impossible for us to forget that this transitory life has no real value except in the preparation it permits for that life. Our natural man is very slow to receive this belief in its fullness. It tells us that we *know* we live here, and do not *know* that we shall live there; and then we forget the unending happiness for which what we are permitted to suffer here is the appointed and the only means. Why it is so we do not know; and it is just here that our faith should come in, and be the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.

The Apostle Paul says, "Whatever is not of faith is sin." Most true, most obviously true is this. Is it not sin to deny the Providence of God, to doubt His presence, His power, or His love? Is it not certain that, if we do not trust in Him, it is

because we do not believe? For if our belief in the goodness and the power of one who was always taking care of us was perfect, without reserve and without doubt, must not our trust in Him be perfect and constant? Then, in our hours of darkness, it may help us to fight against those who are oppressing us, if we remember that we are fighting against one form of that sinfulness and selfishness which He will gladly and surely help us to contend against and conquer, if we ask His help.

If we will but open our eyes and our hearts, we are never left without instruction and guidance and experiences which should give us trust in Him, and strengthen the trust we have. But in this life this trust cannot be perfect; for the reason that this is earth, not heaven. Perfect trust would convert even this earth into heaven. While we live in this world we cannot outlive the need of the suffering which comes when He sees it best, and in the form and measure in which He sees that it will be best fitted to strengthen and purify our faith.

The internal man of Jesus Christ was the Father Himself, who had assumed a human nature to work out our redemption. This human nature was enlightened from within, so that from childhood He knew that He must be about His Father's work. He knew who His Father was, and what that work was. But through that human life,—as we know

not only from Swedenborg, but from the infinitely higher authority of the Gospels themselves,—He had states when the natural obscured the spiritual, as well as states in which the spiritual was triumphant. These alternations lasted to the end,—to Gethsemane, and the cross; and on the cross, he cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!” By this last temptation, of which no mortal man can conceive the intensity, the work of glorification was accomplished. And soon he said, as John tells us, “It is finished;” and then, as Luke records, “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.”

When the fears, the mental distress or external calamities, which are necessary to advance our regeneration come to us, trust in God will bring us consolation and strength. But it must not be a trust that our wishes will be gratified, and what we deem our wants supplied. That must not be. His wisdom cannot be governed by our wisdom. It must be a trust that He will so restrain the swelling waters that they shall not overwhelm us, and that out of apparent evil He will bring abiding good. It may be that poverty has come or is drawing near; that sickness threatens or has smitten us; that disappointment of our cherished wishes, or the fear of this, has darkened our sky. Let us not strive for trust, merely in the hope that it will prevent or put an end to these calamities. They would not

have come, if He who is perfectly wise did not see that they would be good for us. And because He loves us, we shall call upon Him in vain to withhold from us what may be the instruments of blessing. "Thy will, not mine, be done." When this is in very truth our prayer, then will our trust in Him make it possible for His will to be done in us, and in all that concerns us.

For then will our trust, in the first place, confirm our assurance that His love still rules; that He will restrain our sufferings within the narrowest limits which will permit them to have their best effect; and that they will pass away—must pass away—and we shall reap in joy what we have sowed in tears. By thoughts like these, trust in God will give us in our trouble hope, patience, and strength. History tells us of martyrs to whom just these thoughts gave hope, patience, and strength in the midst of agonies to which all that we have to endure is very little.

In the next place, trust in God may promote or possibly accomplish the very work which these calamities or sufferings came to do. Certain it is, that they would not have been permitted to come but for a good purpose; and equally certain must it be, that, when that purpose is accomplished, they will be made to pass away. Surely, we can see that trust in the Lord may hasten and complete

the good these sorrows were intended to do, and in this way hasten their removal. It cannot be a vain hope that this trust will open our eyes, and enable us to see why we suffer so, or what wrongful feeling or habit this sorrow rebukes. Then, if we set ourselves in earnest to repent of it and renounce it, this trust will be for us the best means of escape from the sorrow itself.

But the third and by far the highest use of trust in our Father remains. Our suffering and distress, of whatever kind it be, was permitted to come that it might help us to be heavenly. This truth I repeat again and again; for if we lose sight of it we shall have no ground to stand upon, and no possibility of understanding the Divine Providence. Then, if trust in the Lord is of the very essence of heavenliness, may we not be sure that an effort to trust in Him, to hold on to this trust with a grasp which is all the stronger the more the enemies of our souls strive to rend our trust away, to bring our minds and hearts into such a state that we can say even from the heart, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," — is it not certain that this effort will help us to be heavenly; will at least prepare us to rise from the earthliness whence comes all pain and sorrow into the heavenliness where pain and sorrow are unknown? Is it not certain that this trust, founded as it must be on

faith, and associated as it must be with love and obedience, will prepare us for and secure to us that life in heaven, one hour of which would overpay all the sorrow and suffering of earth, but which will know no hours but those of eternity? Then, with what inexpressible thankfulness shall we look back upon those gifts of pain which have brought us to that home where pain is no more, and peace is evermore!

[NOTE. — The largest part of this paper was printed in the New Jerusalem Magazine.]

SACRIFICE.

THE literal meaning of the word *sacrifice*, as a verb, is to make sacred; as a substantive, it means a thing made sacred. It was made sacred by being offered to the Lord. Hence, the primary and essential idea of sacrifice is to offer to the Lord.

There are three grounds upon which a sacrifice may be offered.

First; as an expression of gratitude and love.

Second; as an offering to the Lord of a part, — as of the first fruits, or the product of the flock or herd, — by way of acknowledgment that all the fruits of the field and all the flocks and herds are His, and are given by Him to man.

Third; to propitiate Him, and win His favor or avert His anger.

Of these three, the first two are right and good. The third is wrong and bad; and is the result of the corruption of mankind, and the falsities thence arising.

So far as we know, sacrifice is as universal as

religion. In the literal sense of the Word, the two eldest children of the first man are represented as offering sacrifice; and in all history sacrifice of some kind seems to have belonged to all forms of religion.

Always, except in the earliest ages of mankind, and in the primitive ages of Christianity, the prevailing idea has been the third of those above stated. Men offered sacrifices to excite the kindness of an indifferent God, or to appease an offended and hostile God. For this purpose men offered to Him their most precious things, in the belief that the more valuable it was the more acceptable it would be to God, and therefore the more likely to effect its purpose of propitiation. As this falsity became intensified, the value of the offering increased, until men offered in sacrifice their brother men; and at length it led the worshippers of the heathen Gods to offer up their own children, not because they were not loved, but because they were the dearest things they had. When the king of Moab was sorely pressed by the kings of Israel and Judah, "he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him a burnt offering upon the wall." This he did undoubtedly because he hoped to induce his God to help him, by the sacrifice of the most valuable thing he possessed. The worshippers of Moloch burned

their children in sacrifice to him. Such horrible practices are impossible now; but the falsity on which it is founded,—that of propitiating an offended God by sacrifice,—remains in greater force than might be believed without investigation. Let us look at the history of the idea of sacrifice in the Christian Church.

From its beginning it was a prevalent belief that our Lord was the Lamb of sacrifice, at once consummating and superseding the whole Jewish ritual of sacrifice. In the very earliest liturgies, and prayers used at the Sacrament of the Supper,¹ we discern with much clearness the belief that our Lord's sacrifice consisted in His sacrifice of Himself to the will of His father; and that in partaking of His flesh and blood under the symbols of bread and wine "in remembrance of Him," the effort of Christians should be to follow Him and sacrifice self to His will.

This just idea was soon obscured and gradually lost. The old and false idea of sacrifice—that it was an offering of something valuable to propitiate and reconcile an offended God—took the place of the primitive idea, and was prevalent in its stead. It has grown into the present doctrine of the Catholic Church; but not without the denial and

¹ In Bunsen's "Hippolytus" is the fullest and best account I have ever seen of these liturgies and prayers.

opposition of good men from time to time through all the ages of that church.

That doctrine teaches that the death of our Lord on the cross was a sacrifice in the same sense in which the lamb offered by the Jewish priest was regarded as a sacrifice; that the perfect justice of the Father condemned mankind for the sin of Adam and their own sins, and that the Son took upon Himself the pains of death in their stead, and by this sacrifice of Himself satisfied that justice, and propitiated and reconciled the offended Father.

Then came the question, To whom is this sacrifice and reconciliation profitable; or whom does it rescue from their deserved condemnation? Is it all men, or only some; and if some only, who are they? This question the Roman Catholic Church answers in this way:—

When the Sacrament is celebrated by a duly consecrated priest, who utters over the bread and wine suitable words in a suitable way, as is done whenever Mass is celebrated, the bread and wine are at once actually changed into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. His own words, when instituting this Sacrament were, "This is my body," and, "This is my blood." These words when spoken by the priest become literally true. When they are repeated by a consecrated priest at a

proper time and in a proper way, a change in the bread and wine takes place,—not apparently, but actually and substantially,—and the bodily presence of our Lord is effected. This was and is called by the Roman Catholic Church “transubstantiation.”

This is held to be a miracle, constantly occurring whenever and wherever the Mass is celebrated. It is performed by the priest by means of the words he utters. Every priest receives by his ordination power to make this change, or perform this miracle, in this way; and only such a priest can do this. When this miraculous change is made, the priest offers the body and blood of our Lord anew; and it is as much an actual sacrifice as when it was offered on the cross. This sacrifice is offered by the priest for all present, and it is operative for the benefit and deliverance from condemnation of all Christians (by which is meant all members of the Catholic Church) who partake of the bread, or for whom the priest partakes of the bread and wine. There is, however, one condition. If the communicant be in mortal sin, he must have confessed his sin to a priest, and repented and performed the penance enjoined upon him, so far as it can be performed at that time, before partaking of the bread.

Such is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. In the Protestant Churches only a part

of this doctrine is retained. There is some confusion and conflict of opinion, as to the way in which the bread and wine of the Supper are, or represent, the body and blood of our Lord. But the miraculous change effected by the priest is given up, and with it the offering of the bread and wine as the actual offering of our Lord in sacrifice, excepting so far as the Lutheran doctrine of "consubstantiation" implies all that was implied in the Romanist doctrine of "transubstantiation." But the idea of sacrifice as a propitiation is retained. It is held even more definitely than in the Catholic Church, that the human race having incurred eternal damnation by the sins of their first parents, the just and offended Father could have His justice satisfied, and reconciliation effected, only by the suffering and death of His Son ; and the saving effect of this sacrifice could be imparted only to those who believe in the Son ; and this saving faith is given to those only who were elect and predestinated thereunto from the beginning of time.

So far as we know, the Catholic doctrine remains unchanged. But the "evangelical doctrine"—so called—of Protestantism has been greatly modified ; not so much by express and formal change of creed, as by omitting, or at least laying less stress upon, the severer parts of the system, and making far less reference to them in preaching or teaching.

When we come to the New Church, we find the idea of sacrifice more distinct and definite than ever before, and the law of sacrifice in fuller force than ever before. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "He that loveth his life shall lose it." "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall save it."

A profound though indefinite meaning has been attached to these words in all the ages of the Christian Church, by all who were willing to rise above the lowest plane of natural and sensual thought and feeling. To those who have accepted the doctrines of the New Christian Church, a still profounder meaning has been disclosed; one which, looking to the Infinite, shows with clearness truths which are of inexpressible moment in their reference to this life, and which, pointing upward to divine truth, will for ever receive and give forth inexhaustible light.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ laid down His life for us during the whole of His life on earth. The life which He laid down was the life which He assumed,—the human life which He took from Mary. It was full of proclivities to evil; of the same proclivities of which our natures are full. It

consisted of self-love, which is the root of all evil ; and this self-love existed in His assumed human nature in its fulness, so intensified by the long accumulation through Mary's ancestry, that all the evil tendencies incident to a corrupted human nature were in the nature which He derived from her and in which He lived on earth. They constituted His human natural life. During that life they came forth into His consciousness successively, as He was ready to meet them. All and each of them He did meet. He indulged none, but resisted all and put them away from Himself; and in each instance of so doing He laid down so much of His life. His life was a continual death. And at length the work was consummated, and He laid down His human life upon the cross.

He was indeed a sacrifice. He did indeed sacrifice Himself for us. His death upon the cross was but the consummation of a long course of sacrifice. It was a sacrifice of Himself; of His own human will to the will of His Father. "Thy will, not mine, be done," was recorded only of the words spoken in the agony in the garden; but they were the tacit utterance of His whole life; they expressed the whole law of that life of sacrifice.

In what way did this sacrifice of Himself "save His people from their sins"? It must never be forgotten that it is not said, "save His people from

the punishment of their sins," but "from their sins."

An adequate and complete answer to this question cannot be given, not merely because our knowledge is so imperfect, but because all human and angelic and therefore finite knowledge of it must be imperfect. For the truths which give this answer lie near the centre of all truth. They disclose the way in which His will is done, and the heavens subsist, and they who dwell there are made happy. They teach the grounds and principles of divine order, and the requirements of that order, and the limitations and conditions it necessarily imposes. An answer adequate in extent to the question would reveal the whole providence of divine goodness, and throw light upon all its mysteries. Know all this truth we cannot. But, beginning with some understanding of it, our progress may be eternal; and it will bear us ever nearer to a comprehension of the Word and the works of God.

A brief statement may be made, which will tell us truth as far as it tells us any thing. By this sacrifice He saves us from our sins, because He laid down His human life in a series of conflicts with and victories over the personal enemies of His human nature and of our human nature. By these victories He subdued the spirits of evil, who ever strive to animate and excite our evil tendencies,

and cause us to practise and to love the sins which they practised and still love. If we yield to their influence, they will make us like themselves. All these evil spirits He reduced to such order, that nevermore shall they assail us beyond our power of resistance; nevermore shall they bring evils into consciousness and power, beyond what is needful that we may know ourselves, and choose, in the freedom which is secured to us for ever, the way of life rather than the way of death.

Who are they who profit by this self-sacrifice of our Lord? He died for all. He died to enable Himself to save men from their sins. But it was only possible for Him to enable Himself to save those who are willing to be saved. His victories over the powers of evil have made men free, and secured to them for ever freedom. This was the best thing infinite love could give, because a choice of good over evil in freedom brings the greatest happiness created beings can enjoy. Because man possesses this freedom, he may "work out his salvation" while "God worketh within him," never to force or compel, but always to lead him, so far as it is in the power of omnipotence to do it, to make in freedom the choice of good rather than evil. And because man may in freedom do this, he may refuse to do it. By His life and death all men are redeemed. All are redeemed from a bondage from

which escape would have been otherwise impossible. By this redemption the power of "working out their own salvation" is secured to all. And all who make use of this power, and in the freedom thus made their own resist, overcome, and put away their sinfulness, are "saved from their sins," and become the heirs of Heaven.

In Him was an internal, which was the Father, Jehovah; and an external, which was a human nature derived from the mother. The conflicts within Him were between this internal and this external. In every man there is an internal into which strength and saving influence flow, and an external in which reside all the proclivities to evil which come to us by inheritance from all our ancestry. The conflicts within us also must be between this internal and this external. In our Lord's conflicts His internal conquered, and by its strength He overcame the whole of His external. We profit by what He did, in the degree in which we do in our human nature what He did in His. Because He did this, we can do it. Because He did this, we *must* do it; for as He walked in this path there can be no other way of following Him. He was "tempted in all points like as we are," and we are tempted as He was, but infinitely less. For His temptations covered the whole ground, and included those of all men in all time; for His

power was infinite, and sufficed to resist and conquer all. This no man can do; but none of the enemies of our souls are permitted to assail any man except those which he may resist and conquer if he will. Our Lord commands us to take up our cross and follow Him. He lays this command upon us, because He loved us enough to die for us; and because that is the road by which we may go to happiness, to heaven, and to Him.

If an essential idea of sacrifice is that we offer to the Lord something which we love and value, how can this apply to the sacrifice of evils, vices, and impurities of self-love and worldliness, and all those things of our natural man which we resist and strive to put away from us, because we know them to be the enemies of our souls and the causes of all unhappiness? The answer is, that these are precisely the things which we do love and value so long and so far as our natural proclivities are unsubdued. It is because we love them so well, that the conflict between them and whatever within us is better than they is so painful and difficult, so constant and enduring. When and so far as the spiritual gains upon the natural, then the sacrifices we offer change their aspect. Then we have something that is good and true to offer to the Lord. We offer them in sacrifice when we acknowledge them to be all His, all given to us by Him, and when we

confess with the heart and with the understanding that none of these things originate in ourselves. We offer them as the first fruits of the fields and the flocks of the Spirit; the first effects of the new creation.

If we go forward in the way of regeneration, sacrifice, in both senses, goes with us at every step. Continually we have to discern, resist, and put away from us the evils and impurities which we still love, and to which we are still prone. If we are angry without a cause or in excess of the cause, He who tells us that we are then in danger of the judgment calls us to escape this danger by the sacrifice of this anger to the love of the neighbor. Do we cherish some desire which conscience and religion tell us is wrongful? Let us sacrifice it by refusing to indulge it even in thought, giving it no foothold in life, and expelling it by continued effort from our minds and wills. If we have business relations with our neighbors (and almost all men have some), we may make here the daily sacrifice of the unholy spirit of wrongful gain, not only in the large matters in which the devil of dishonesty plainly shows his face, but in the innumerable small things,—trifles he persuades us they are,—in which he is ever tempting us to forget what is due to our neighbor, and by which he keeps the door open that he and seven worse than himself may enter and take

possession of us. And when we make these sacrifices what do we put away, what do we lose? Only the seeds of unhappiness and of spiritual sickness and suffering; only that which clouds our life here, and will darken another life with still blacker and heavier clouds.

THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS.

“THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass,” closes the canon of the New Testament. Very many attempts have been made to interpret this prophecy, but always in accordance with the external history of the Christian Church. Swedenborg gives a very different explanation. He shows it to be a prophecy of the internal condition of this church,—first in its early ages; then of its decline and decay under the influence of the love of spiritual dominion, and of doctrines which falsified the truth by separating faith from charity and life; then of the judgment which should befall it; and then of the descent from heaven and establishment on earth of the city of the New Jerusalem, by which is represented and meant the New Church.

In the 12th chapter, vv. 1–6, it is said: “There appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet,

and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon. . . . And the dragon stood before the woman, for to devour her child as soon as it should be born. . . . And she brought forth a man-child. . . . And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand, two hundred, and three-score days. . . . And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time from the face of the Serpent."

Swedenborg interprets this as follows: The woman clothed with the sun signifies the New Church. The man-child whom she was to bring forth signifies the truth or doctrine of this church. The dragon who sought to devour her child signifies the falsities which were ready to suffocate and destroy this truth. That the woman fled into the wilderness where she should be nourished for a season, signifies that in its early ages this church should be in obscurity, unobserved and unknown by the world at large, and should remain so until the completion of that state and the beginning of another; for such a period is always signified by three days and a half,

three years and a half, a time, times, and half a time, forty-two months or twelve hundred and sixty days, which equalled three years and a half, calling the year three hundred and sixty days as many of the ancients did, — one or other of these phrases often occurring in the Scriptures.

The reasons for this seclusion in the wilderness, as taught us by Swedenborg, may be stated thus: The truths of the New Church cannot be received by those who are confirmed in false doctrines, — as that God consists of three persons; as that salvation comes from faith alone, conduct having nothing to do with it. Neither can they be received by those who are confirmed in unbelief, or who, by indifference to spiritual truth and devotion to the cares and pleasures of this world, have closed and barred their minds. And, finally, that it is of divine mercy that these truths are withheld from those who could only reject them, or if they received would certainly distort and pervert them.

For all these reasons the Church is held in such seclusion that even its existence is known only to a few, and to most of them only in the most general and remote way. In its life of more than a century, no man of high rank in society, in science, or in literature has adopted and advocated its doctrines, and given to them the prestige of his own position. And no one among those who profess to

have received and endeavored to diffuse them has been able to invest them with the charm of beautiful composition, or urge them with the force of eloquence. I think we can understand that it is well for the church itself that it was not brought into contact with, and therefore conflict with, the powers that in these days are prevalent in the Christian Church. If the leaders of the dominant sects saw it as it is, the deadliest foe of their cherished dogmas, the whole artillery of argument, calumny, denunciation, and appeal to fear and prejudice would be brought into play; and there would be a violence and universality of assault which would operate disastrously upon those minds which are in any measure within the influence of old-church doctrine, whether by education, association, or habitual belief.

Then there is the so-called Liberalism of the day, which stands in such perfect antagonism to Orthodoxy that it may well seem to have no other relation to it; and yet it bears the relation of a child to its parent. The irrationality of a doctrine which asserts that three persons, each of whom is God, are not three Gods, and which seeks to hold three Gods as one God; and the irreligion of a doctrine which separates religion from life, and salvation from conduct, — caused a violent reaction, and thus gave birth to what bears the name of Unitarianism. This name has many very different meanings, for it has

gathered to itself all of the prevailing indifference, or even unbelief, which desires for any reason to bear a religious name. But its leaders generally stand in opposition to the New Church; sometimes in courteous contempt, sometimes in distrust and doubt, sometimes in simple indifference. To some of them it seems almost as bad as Orthodoxy; to others it is objectionable in its demand for positive and earnest faith, and definite belief in God and His Word. And it is difficult to say whether, on the whole, Liberalism or Orthodoxy is more hostile to the New Church.

Then, if the philosophical and scientific unbelievers, who are much the majority of the leading philosophers and scientists of the day, saw in it the most powerful opponent of the sensuous reasoning which is with them the foundation of all truth, how would the whole force of natural and sensuous argument be let loose to prove it to be "irrational," "transcendental," "enthusiastic," opposed to all sound logic, and incapable of proof!

How well should the few who have been able — not by greater goodness or wisdom, but by happier circumstances and influences — to receive and accept these seeds of truth, know how ill-fitted they and the tender plants which grow from them are, in their infancy, to withstand the storm, the winter's cold, or the burning drought of summer! And we can see,

too, that if the new truths had come forth into general acknowledgment and wide acceptance in this unprepared condition of human thought and character, how many might have received them, not in a heart fitted for them, but to make them food for the pride of self-intelligence, of vanity, or love of distinction. In how many hearts might the seeds of truth have "sprung up because they had no deepness of earth," and borne no fruit, and died! If something of this can be seen even now, there would have been a thousand-fold as much if the reception of the doctrines of the New Church had been as easy as it is now difficult. The reasons why the coming of this church was delayed so long are much the same with those for the manner of its coming now. They resolve themselves into the great principle that truth itself, and especially religious truth, and most especially the highest spiritual truth, would not be a good gift except to those who *can* — whether they do or not is for their own choice — but to those who *can* receive it in the love of goodness and for the sake of goodness. To all others it would be an unmixed evil.

For these reasons we may see the divine mercy in causing the New Church to fly into the wilderness and abide there for a season. In other words, for causing the advent of the New Church to be so little known, and its truths to remain in the obscurity in

which they have been for more than a century, and still are.

But more than this is said. While the church is in the wilderness, it is nourished there; which must mean that it is so dealt with that it may live and grow. What and whence is this nourishment?

Swedenborg answers this question. He says, after speaking of the "dragons" spoken of in the Apocalypse as denoting the falsities that are hostile to the New Church, and the persons who hold and urge these falsities: "The rest who are in that church, who live the life of faith, which is charity, are not dragons, though among them; for they know no other than that it is agreeable to doctrine that faith produces the fruits which are good works, and that the faith which justifies and saves is to believe those things which are in the Word, and to do them." Thus, in the midst of falsities the good may learn truth; and it is saving truth. And again, he states the reasonings by which the dragons maintain their system of salvation by faith alone, and says: "These reasonings have place only with the learned rulers of the church, and are not known to nor understood by the people of the church; and thence it is that the New Church is helped by these latter, and increases." Such persons are taught and profess, not only election, predestination, and the like, but also the tri-personal

God, upon whom the whole system rests. But we may well hope that some of them at least study the Gospels, and all their thought of God is of our Lord. He is their God, and the only God they have; and Him they worship and endeavor to obey. It is deeply impressed upon their minds and hearts that they must have faith in Him, and seek to love their neighbors, and lead a good life, in accordance with His precepts. Their religious professions and formulas do not prevent their reception of the truths now offered them; for they see that these truths teach and help them to do and to be what they have hitherto desired to do and to be. And thus they accept the doctrines of the New Church, in such modified form as the mental character of each one causes; it may be without renouncing their old faith or their religious associations, and perhaps in some cases without knowing that they have adopted any new truth. But in them, and by and through them, the New Church is nourished and grows.

Then we may believe that there are those who, having been educated in the erroneous doctrines of the church that is passing away, have been able to see that they were irrational and irreligious, and have therefore cast them aside; without, as too many do, believing that these doctrines are those of Christianity, and therefore if they reject them they must give up all hold upon Christianity, and even upon

religion itself. They do not think this, because the religious sentiment is too strong within them, and counsels them to seek for a true religion instead of the false religion they have rejected; and in their search for this they find the church which has come to make all things new.

Then there are those who have been as it were Gentiles, it may be without much or any instruction in doctrine, and preserved by ignorance from errors to which they might have clung. As they become older and the rational faculty is developed, or later in life, by reason of some salutary influence, the remains of the good and the true implanted in their minds in earlier life awake, and they feel the need of religious faith, and find in what the New Church offers that which satisfies their minds and their hearts.

All such, and others whom our Father sees to be capable of reception, He leads to His church by an infinite variety of means and in an infinite variety of ways. Every one can tell how it was that he or she was first led to seek this truth, or perhaps to find it without seeking for it. No two of the stories would be the same, for infinite love and infinite wisdom adjust the experiences of every life with precise adaptation to the needs and capacities of that life. Hereafter, and it may be in this life, we shall look back on these experiences with wonder at

the wisdom, and gratitude for the goodness, which guided us through the strange and crooked pathways that ended in the road that led us home.

It may be thought the nourishment thus provided for the church while in the wilderness has only sufficed to keep it alive, but not to give it growth and strength. Well may we think so if we confine the New Church within the limits of its professed societies; and, believing so, see how feeble and how few they are; how slowly the old ones grow, and how slowly their number increases; and how little of spiritual vitality manifests itself in them; and how little there is in the conduct and character of us who are their members that makes our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven for giving to men truths so full of life and good. But let it not be thought for this that the professed and visible New Church is dead and useless. When we remember what minds and affections and habits and characters we brought into it, we must cease to wonder that its blossoms are not fairer and its fruits not richer, that its light is not stronger and its heat more vitalizing. But let us not for a moment suppose that it has been or is useless or unfruitful. If it has done nothing else, it has helped forward the work of the Lord by the publication and diffusion of the books of the church, and by the offer of its public worship

and instruction to the world. If we venture to think, as I humbly hope we may, that our brotherhood has been in some measure a spiritual brotherhood, and has nursed the spark of spiritual life within us, let us be most thankful; and let us show our gratitude by unremitted efforts to strengthen the bonds which unite us, and promote the good, external and internal, of the church which embraces us in its motherhood.

If we extend our view of the church beyond its professed members, we shall see that the church, while in the wilderness, has been abundantly nourished; has had food we knew not of; has grown and is growing rapidly and widely. To see this we must look for the influence of its truths on human thought. We must remember that Swedenborg tells us that the three essentials of the Church are the Divinity of the Saviour, the Sanctity of the Word, and Charity in Life. Where these are, there is the church. Where either of these is, there is so much of the church. If the divinity of the Lord is disencumbered in any mind of the obstructions of the tri-personal falsity, and yet left as a belief that He is Immanuel and most truly God with us, there is the New Church; for first and only in that church, since the days of primitive Christianity, has that truth been declared. If, amidst all the assaults of sensuous unbelief against the Word and

its inspiration, there is in any mind a firmly seated conviction that it is and must be indeed the infinite Word of God, holy beyond all things else, there is the New Church, which has first taught in what way it is the infinite Word of God, and wherein its holiness resides. If we see in any life a true charity, founded not upon mere natural kindness, but on the will of God and the brotherhood of man as His children, and referring all things to His will and to His help, there too we see the church.

While these are the vital and essential doctrines of the New Church, there are others which may be called collateral and subsidiary. One of these is the doctrine of correspondences, which discloses the true relation between spirit and matter, between the spiritual world and the material world, and shows that the former is a world of causes of which the latter is the world of effects. It tells us that these causes are in their effects, and are represented by them; and thus gives significance to the beauty and sublimity of Nature, and the wonderful wisdom displayed in all its laws and phenomena, making this outside world vocal to all who have ears to hear, and hanging upon its walls pictures of the world within us for all who have eyes to see. More, far more, than this: this science of correspondence gives to the letter of Scripture an inner meaning and an invincible defence; and when we read this, we know

as we could not know before that it is the Word of God, and we learn what this Word says to us.

Another of these subordinate doctrines of the New Church is that which tells us not merely that after death we live again,—for this was long since taught to mankind,—but what that life is. It teaches us that we rise at death from the material body, in that spiritual body which kept the material body alive, and find ourselves men and women, with all the organs, senses, powers, and faculties we had while here, and in an external world more perfectly adapted to all possible uses, activities, and enjoyments than the world which we have left.

We call these two doctrines—of correspondence, and of actual and personal life beyond the grave—collateral and subsidiary; because, whatever may be their immeasurable importance in connection with and in relation to the vital and essential doctrines of the church, they have no value without that connection and relation; by which we mean no spiritual and abiding value. And this is the reason why the full disclosure of them has been withheld from mankind until these vital and essential doctrines could be revealed.

Of the influence of these new truths upon human thought and their wide reception, variously modified and imperfect, we find evidence all around us in the theology, philosophy, literature, science, and even

the common conversation of the day. We cannot take up any new book of weight or moment, but we find thoughts and expressions which a few years ago could not be found anywhere, and which we can trace, distinctly and certainly, to the new truths which are now beginning to actuate the human mind. We may well regard this as evidence that the New Church is now nourished and growing in the wilderness of this world; and none the less potent is this evidence, that many, perhaps very many, of those who offer this evidence would, if they were asked, honestly deny any indebtedness to the New Church, and perhaps any knowledge of that church or even of its existence. These thoughts are now beginning to be diffused through the intellectual air which men breathe. Originating in the works of Swedenborg, then through works professedly collateral to his, and then through others which have, perhaps undesignedly, borrowed from them, these truths have spread themselves abroad with an ever-widening circle.

Nor are we without the right to believe that the heavens from which the New Church is descending rain down their influence in a thousand ways of which we know nothing; and this influence must be widely and actively operative.

So is the woman nourished in the place provided for her. But, beside all this, there is a kind of

negative preparation going on in the rapid decay and weakening of the falsities which would most stubbornly resist the coming of the New Church, and suffocate the man-child in its tender infancy. To illustrate what we mean, we need but refer to the decline of Calvinism. The fact is both certain and obvious. Probably there is no one now who would preach or assert without reserve such things as Edwards taught, — in his sermon, for example, called “The Glory of God in the Damnation of Sinners,” — or as the Westminster Confession of Faith inculcates. Even in its strongholds Calvinism now has its face covered, like the veiled prophet of Eastern story, because its ugliness would terrify and disgust all who could see it.

Nor is there wanting an analogous fact at the opposite pole of religious thought. Infidelity has become less rampant and aggressive. It, too, wears a veil or a mask of gentle courtesy, which might almost seem belief. The sudden appearance and rapid growth of what is called “agnosticism” is a significant phenomenon. The word comes from the 23d verse of the 17th chapter of Acts, where Paul says to the men of Athens, he found in their city an altar with this inscription: “To the unknown God.” The Greek word here translated “unknown” is “agnosto.” A few years ago, a fashion came up, first in Germany and afterwards in England, of saying that God must

be infinite; and, as man is finite, and the finite cannot comprehend the infinite, it is demonstrably impossible that we should know any thing whatever about Him, and therefore that God must be for ever unknown to man. To this doctrine the word "agnosticism" was applied. At first, men held it who called themselves religious, and even Christians, on the strength of their admission that there is a God; and even now there are those who hold agnosticism as a mode of religious belief. But infidelity caught at it as just the veil of which it had begun to feel the necessity. Seldom do we now hear the cry, "There is no God!" If the fool still says so in his heart, he is not so foolish as to say it aloud. He expresses all that he means just as well and far more safely when he says, "Yes, there is a God, for there is doubtless a first cause who may rightly be called God; but we do not know, and never can know, any thing about Him." This cry is a softer cry than the other. It seems as if, in uttering it, unbelief offered an apology for itself. It shows that the old, offensive, flat denial of God is out of date.

Such facts as these,—such gains of truth and such diminutions of falsity,—might encourage a hope that the day was not far distant which Swedenborg predicted, when the church would come forth from the obscurity of the wilderness "with multitudes." But when we reflect upon the thorough

antagonism still existing between prevalent modes of thinking, feeling, and living, and such thoughts, affections, and lives as this church inculcates and demands; when we remember how little progress the truth has been able to make in subduing our own wayward hearts, and bringing our inner and outer life into conformity with the requirements of the church,—we may well believe that ages upon ages must elapse before that day can come.

It is indeed one powerfully operative cause why the church is in the wilderness of the world, and remains there in obscurity generally unknown and wholly unappreciated, that the New Church is in the wilderness in each and all of us who profess to have received its doctrines. What can be more obvious or more certain than that if the church were more potent, and therefore more clearly manifested in the lives, the conduct, and the character of those who call themselves its receivers, it could not fail to exert far more influence on the world around us? We know that this church, in the measure in which any one receives it in heart and life, must make him or her honest, kind, pure, religious in life and conversation, loving the neighbor, finding happiness in usefulness, always trusting in God and making His will their will. We know that this church, if cordially received, must make its members free from the evil habits and customs which

prevail in the world. If we understood and received its truth, clearly and firmly; if we felt constantly the motives which it offers, and if our days and hours were habitually governed by the influences which that church, as far as it is alive, must exert, — what can be more certain than that such a presentation of the Church would act irresistibly upon all who saw it, and would proclaim, with a voice to which none could be deaf, that new light and new life had come to earth, and were making earth a preparation for heaven in a way and in a degree never known before.

Let us imagine, in any of our large cities, a New-Church society of five hundred members, each and all of whom exhibited, in their various walks of life, the exact integrity and watchful care for the interests of their neighbors, the fidelity to all duty, the purity of life and conversation, the wise benevolence and unselfish usefulness, which are inculcated and demanded by the truths we profess to believe, — is it possible to doubt that such a society would be as “a city set upon a hill,” shining with radiant light that all must see, and the very blindest recognize, as light from heaven? If we doubt this, or see it obscurely, must it not be because we see the church obscurely, and do not recognize its immeasurable worth as a gift from Heaven and a guide to Heaven?

And yet it is certain that no such effects have followed what we regard as the establishment of the New Church on earth. How can this be accounted for except by the supposition that the *cause* for these *effects* does not yet exist? That it exists in the church itself, we know; we must think, therefore, that it does not exist in any manifestation of the church which the world has yet seen. It may be said that it is permitted by Divine Providence that no such exhibition of the church has been made to an unready world as would lead to an unreal and therefore injurious acceptance of truths which could not be obeyed. This may be true; but it leaves unaffected the fact of this almost entire failure to exhibit the church externally as it is internally. The church is in the wilderness in each and all of us. Perhaps this was inevitable in its beginning; but it should none the less be acknowledged by us, and amended if we can.

The words "desert" and "wilderness" are often used as if they were synonymous. They are not quite so. A desert is rather a sandy or rocky region in which little or nothing vegetable or animal lives and grows. A wilderness is a region of which the soil is unbroken; but it may be fertile, and there may be in it a large and varied growth of wild, uncultivated, and unfruitful vegetation; and many wild beasts may dwell there, and many birds

build their nests, but with little of human life, nothing of civilized life, and nothing which contributes to the support or enjoyment of civilized life. Every natural mind is a desert or a wilderness. In the world around us, and in ourselves, is a wilderness that corresponds to and is represented by the wildernesses of the earth. There is in it abundance of life, such as it is. But it is a life with little of a true humanity; for that is a spiritual humanity, and looks up constantly to our Father in the heavens. Nor can it have this humanity without reformation and regeneration, or not until the soul that "cleaveth unto the dust" is "quickened according to His word." It is into such a wilderness that the New Church enters when it enters into a natural and unregenerate heart and life; and it will abide there "three times and half a time," or while this state endures and until a new one begins.

The time will come when the science of correspondence will be understood and its lessons learned, and the nature without us will speak to us of the nature within. Then, when we wander through a wilderness, we shall see in its thickets which we can scarcely penetrate, in its wild and tangled growths, in its untilled and unfruitful soil, and in the beasts which make it their home, — in all these things we shall see pictures as true as if the sunlight painted them, of the wilderness that is within

ourselves; of the thoughts, affections, and habits which have grown up and possess our hearts, and constitute our lives.

But is there nothing good, nothing beautiful and attractive in this wilderness? There may be much. We may admire the varied beauty of its vegetation, the sweetness of its wild flowers, the melody of its song-birds, even the graceful movement of its wild animals; for these may correspond to and represent natural good. Nor need we condemn this, or refuse to see and acknowledge its charm; for this is often very great. We may be thankful that the wilderness of this life has so much in it that is not bad; so much that we may vivify with a true life. For all natural good may be vivified and regenerated. The wilderness may be tamed: we may look for and enjoy the beauty that is in it. But we must not forget that it is a wilderness, with far more in it that is neither good nor beautiful. Its fairest blossoms are sometimes poisonous; its most graceful animals ferocious and destructive; and its brightest hues those of its green and gilded snakes. If we are content to live in this wilderness just as it is, we shall become as one of its wild animals; if we are content with natural good, and know nothing higher and seek nothing higher, we must at the best sink down into the condition of a harmless animal. Natural good, when it is so entirely

and obstinately natural as to refuse altogether in this life and in the other to be vivified by spiritual good, ceases to be human good.

If our eyes were opened by the science of correspondence, what lessons we might learn of the work the church has to do when it comes into this wilderness,—whether in the world or in ourselves,—and of the obstacles it must encounter in doing this work! It comes to change the wilderness into cultivated fields and gardens; to break up the hard soil, and sow seeds that shall bring forth bread for the hungry,—the bread of heaven for those who hunger after heaven. With what toil, what patience through days of tempest and cold and drought, what labor which will sometimes seem unavailing and hard to be borne, must we strive to root up the wild growths which cumber the ground and the thorns and briers which would choke good seed! How often will it seem to us useless to try, and foolish to labor so hard, for rewards that are or seem so far away! And then we doubt whether these rewards will come and will be worth the price we pay for them, or indeed whether the truths we thought we saw are not fallacies, and the hopes we have sometimes enjoyed, illusive. And then how often, when we lay the axe to these wild roots, do we feel as if we were killing what we love! We see grace and beauty in these wild woods, and in

the flowers which carpet the useless ground. We love all this; we love our own natural good which we have been accustomed to hear praised, and to find attractive to others. We love the praise of men, and we love to think of our titles to it. Perhaps we dearly love and enjoy the pleasures of a natural life, — the social enjoyments, the troops of friends, and the place we hold in their regard; and all the while we feel that these things savour but little of spiritual life, and must be, with more or less pain and strife, vivified with a higher life, if we would persist in our determination to rise above this low plane of natural life. And it may be that our mental tastes and habits are such that it is hard work to value and seek and make our own the spiritual truth which is so necessary for us; “we loathe this light bread;” so many pleasant books await us which we must lay aside to take up those that must seem to us, while we are in that state, hard and dull.

Such moods as these are trials. They are what Swedenborg usually calls temptations. They come to different persons in different forms and measure. To none do they come unless they are necessary and may be useful. They come to all in the way in which they may be most useful. They come to teach us what we are, if we can be made to learn the lesson. They come to strengthen our faith by the exercise of faith.

We may not overcome the wrongful tendencies from which these temptations spring; we may fail under them: and then these tendencies will be developed and confirmed, and become the ruling elements of our character; and the dulness and spiritual torpor we have felt will gradually deepen into spiritual death. But it need not be so. Earnest desire and effort and prayer will assuredly bring the strength we need. And if we overcome, we shall find the promise of the Lord fulfilled: "He will make the wilderness like Eden, the garden of God; joy and gladness will be found therein, and the voice of melody."

SUFFERING.

THE scientific works of Swedenborg are eminently systematic, and would bear comparison in this respect with those of any scientist, ancient or modern. It is not so with his theological works. Without stopping to show how this difference arises from the difference in the subject-matters of these two classes of his writings, it is enough now to say that the truth of the New Church, as gathered from his theological writings, is *in itself* entirely systematic, and indeed almost organic. If we look on an oak-tree, we find a massive trunk, dividing as it grows upwards into a few strong limbs, and they again into many boughs, and these into innumerable branches, which are clothed with a mantle of foliage. Not unlike this is the system of New-Church truth. Its central and all-supporting stem is the doctrine of the Lord. From this branch out a few great truths which are most distinct and clearly defined, but which again give rise to lesser branches which are intertwined and touch each other in all

directions. One of these great truths is that which tells us that our Lord is our exemplar; that the way in which He walked to His glorification is the way in which we must walk to our regeneration. So true is this in all derivations and particulars, that in considering spiritual or religious topics we must again and again advert to this truth. This is especially true of some topics, and of none more true than of the subject of this paper.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of our Lord as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The impression we get from the Gospels is that His life was one of almost continuous sadness,—His sorrows culminating in Gethsemane, where the intensity of His suffering made His sweat bloody, which is a fact unknown in the history of mental anguish. It continued and increased to the end; and on the cross it broke down His human endurance, and as a man He died. He had hung upon the cross but six hours. Those who die from crucifixion live some days, if not put to death sooner; and those who were crucified with Him were found alive after He had died. We may believe, therefore, that He died on the cross, but not from it; died, because His mental pains were greater than human physical strength could bear. We should not forget this; and especially should we remember it when we celebrate the Last Supper. This holy sacrament

has an infinitude of spiritual and heavenly meaning, which we should learn as we can, and remember. But we must not let the spiritual sense obscure our knowledge or our recollection of the literal sense; for that remains ever true, ever holy, and the only foundation of that spiritual sense which rests upon it. Our Lord commanded us to "do this in remembrance of Him;" and we are instructed by Swedenborg, more than once, that when we partake of the bread and the wine as symbols of His flesh and His blood, and do this in remembrance of Him, as we do it we should remember His passion or suffering, and the cup which He drank.

There are many reasons why we should remember our Lord's sufferings. The most direct and obvious of these is one which Swedenborg speaks of distinctly and strongly. It is that this recollection may animate and vivify our love and gratitude to One who voluntarily endured for our sakes all the suffering that man can endure, and more; who passed through sorrow, sounding its deepest depths, that He might save us from spiritual death.

Another reason is that His sufferings may convince us of the need and the good of suffering. If we believe that there is a God of love and wisdom and power, and open our eyes to the world about us and see the perfectly universal mingling of sorrow and pain of some kind in the whole of

created life, how can we doubt that He permits this abounding sorrow because for some reason it is necessary and good? More than this, if He, the Almighty, the God of heaven and earth, came down to earth and assumed a humanity which could suffer and did suffer all that humanity can suffer, we may be sure that there was a reason for this,—a reason as large as the suffering which included all suffering; a necessity as infinite as the love which assumed the nature capable of this suffering.

We are told, "Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth;" but let us not forget the residue of the text, "and teacheth out of thy law." If, when sorrow and distress fall on us, we do not by their help learn some new truth, or revive and strengthen something we had learned, the chastisement is so far in vain, and the blessing does not reach us. While we live in this world, we may not see with any clearness why the Lord makes use of suffering as His instrument in so large a part of His work of mercy. We are too near it. It envelops us and all we see of created existence, like a thick cloud. Only when we have passed through this cloud into that world where the sun of heaven shines, shall we be able to look back and discern clearly the mercy which is now veiled from our sight. But this we know, and may remember here: we are commanded to take up our cross and follow

Him. We are to walk in the path He trod. That path led Him to the perfect glorification of the human nature which suffered so fearfully. That path and that only can lead us to our regeneration. He followed that path of sorrow until it made that humanity divine. We must follow it, not so far as He did, for that cannot be, but until our evils are so far cleansed away by regeneration, that we are capable of conjunction with Him. Had there been any other way but this, He would not have taken this way. There was no other way for Him, and there is no other way for us. When after the last supper our Lord washed the feet of his disciples, and Peter objected, our Lord said to him two things: one was, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." The other was, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." From the first moment of our life to the last, He is endeavoring to wash our defilements away that we may have part with Him. At every hour, and for every man, He does this in the way that is best for that hour and that man. How He does it we do not know; and it is of His mercy that we do not know, for if we did we should be too prone to mix ourselves with it and delay or arrest His work. But if the work be done, then will light fall on the path which lay in utter darkness while we were treading it. The Lord told

Moses that he could not see His face and live; but that after He had passed by, he might see Him from behind. So, when His providence, perhaps a painful one, is approaching or passing by us, we cannot see Him in it. But when it has passed wholly by, we may sometimes see a part of the love and wisdom which filled and guided it. And, in the great hereafter, we may look back and see Him in all the events of our earthly life so clearly, as to fill us with wonder and thankfulness for all His providences; and most of all, it may be, for those which as we passed through them seemed to smite us with the heaviest blows.

It is difficult to reconcile the goodness of God with the vast amount of human suffering. It is difficult to believe that He loves us perfectly while He permits sorrow, so much of which seems at once useless and unmerited, to fall upon all His children. This difficulty lessens in proportion as we learn to comprehend the central truths,—that He always preserves for us our spiritual freedom, and enables and permits us to choose evil rather than good, because if we could not *choose* evil we could not *choose* good and make it our own by this choice. We may see that Omnipotence itself, by the constant preservation of this freedom, imposes upon itself a limit; and that while He infinitely desires that we should choose good, He *cannot* compel us to

do so. Then we reach the conviction that the suffering which abounds in the universe exists by His permission, only because and only so far as He can make it an instrument whereby He helps us and leads us to choose good in freedom, and by this choice become capable of the unending happiness of heaven.

There is a practical result from all this of unspeakable importance. While our minds are penetrated by these truths, we shall always be able to accept whatever sorrow falls upon us, as the gift of our Father, and therefore as the gift of love. Let it take what shape it may, — disappointed hope, loss of money, poverty, pain and sickness, the breaking up of home, or the death of those who made home happy, or disappointment, fear, and anxiety in any of their myriad forms, — they all come by no accident, but are permitted by Him who loves us that they may do us good. Then we shall not “be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day.” For whatever comes to us, we shall be sure that it comes because He who knows all things knows that it is well for us that it should come.

It is always true that nothing ever happens or can happen to any person but that which is then the best thing that could happen to him. From this truth we may rightly derive comfort and

consolation in suffering. But we may pervert this truth and make it mischievous. We do this if we forget that the thing which happens may be very bad in itself, and may be best for us only because by our folly or misconduct we have made it so. Certainly, calamity is not the effect of wrong-doing in all cases; but as certainly it is so in many and perhaps in most cases. This man has contracted a painful disease by his own negligence or vice; that man by wasteful living or by greedy speculation has lost his property. Either of them may lawfully think God is good, and would not have suffered this misfortune to have fallen upon him if it had not been good for him. But he must not forget that it was good for him only because he had been foolish or vicious, or both. He may be glad that it came to bring him to a just sense of his own weakness or wickedness, and excite him to efforts to put these evil things out of his life by repentance and amendment. But he must remember that calamity or suffering of any kind is not good in itself, and becomes good for us only when it weakens the power of evil within us. Generally, this effect comes only when, instead of forgetting the evil which the suffering brought to light, we remember it well, and learn to hate it for itself and not merely for the punishment which it brings.

I do not believe that sorrow ever comes in any

form to any one without doing some good, however far it may be from accomplishing all the good it might do. We know that the Lord is in the constant effort, not merely to raise all to heaven, but also to lift those from the direst depths of hell who cannot be made willing to be lifted out of it. And on this ground I think all suffering productive of some good. It is certain, however, that all the good which sorrow came to do and might do is never done, unless we accept it as the means of resisting some evil or of strengthening some good; and if we do that, we co-operate with the Divine Providence which permitted this sorrow to come. It is said, "He maketh darkness and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest come forth." They come forth and strive to make us their prey; and it may seem to us as if they would destroy us. But it is written also, "The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens." He maketh the day when they retreat, as well as the night when they come; and day and night, summer and winter, follow each other through the whole of earthly life. Swedenborg tells us that these alternations are so necessary that without them regeneration is impossible. He in whose life they do not occur falls into the unhappy condition of those who, "Because they have no changes, fear not God." But even in the darkest hour we may say, "Thy will,

not mine, be done!" and we may strengthen our faith and trust in the Lord by the effort to do so.

Let us try—and we may hope that we shall not always try in vain—to discern the very evils which this or that sorrow came to rebuke; and then, by setting ourselves in earnest to put those very evils away, we may actively co-operate with Divine Providence. And if those evils, which made this sorrow necessary, are resisted and overcome, with them will pass away the necessity for this sorrow; and we may be sure that the sorrow itself will pass away with the necessity for it. But we must not always hope to turn our night into day, and by lifting up our soul to our Lord make our pain unpainful; for then the sorrow would cease to be sorrow, and might not do for us all the good it came to do. But we may in this way attain to something of rest, to some sense of peace in the midst of suffering.

And after the conflict is over, and the night has passed, how bright the morning will be. Then we may see that by every one of these events we were lifted somewhat out of ourselves, and were somewhat nearer what our Father would have us be. After every affliction, if it be used aright, it may be given us to know that we have taken one step farther in the path in which our Lord Himself walked, and in which He would have us walk, because it leads to Him.

TEMPTATION.

TEMPTATION is always a conflict. It is always a battle between good and evil; between evil spirits attendant on man, and angels who are with him and would help him to resist, overcome, and remove the evil. What and whence is this evil; and what and whence the good which resists this evil?

If we imagine a man totally devoid of self-love, of all thought of self or care for self, never thinking of any thing to be desired because it would give pleasure, or to be avoided because it would give pain, we imagine a man devoid of all motive for action, and then action would be impossible. He would not be a living man; he would not be a man at all. Self-love is, therefore, the abiding basis of all human character. Take it entirely away, and there would be no foundation for activity of any kind, for personality or individuality. It is implanted in every heart as the foundation of all character. And yet self-love is the source and centre of all evil.

Are we not bringing a fearful charge against our Creator? He is the Lord. We assert that He

is love itself, and wisdom itself, and omnipotence. How then can we think that He has made the source and centre of all evil the foundation of all human character. He has done this because He is perfect love; because He cannot but desire to give to man the best thing that an infinite Creator can give, or that a created being can receive. And self-love is made the basis of human character, because it may become the means of man's receiving from his Father this best thing: for this best thing is free and willing love to God and to the neighbor. And the selfish love of self may become this best thing, because our Father gives to every man who will accept it and use it the power to convert this love of self for the sake of self,—which is a selfish love of self—into a love of self for the sake of others, which is the love of others. Not only so, but it is the constant effort of Divine Providence in its government of every man's life and all its circumstances, to make this power effectual; that is, to help man in every possible way to be willing that this vital change from an infernal love to a heavenly love should be made in him.

To be willing! for if he does not consent, this work cannot be done in him. If it is done, it is the Lord's work; the whole of it, from the beginning throughout, is the Lord's work: but the Lord cannot do this work excepting by and through man's own will.

He can do, and He does, all that is possible to infinite wisdom and infinite power, to help man and to lead him; but it is only to help and to lead him to do himself his share of the work. This freedom of choice and free determination, or this spiritual freedom, are constantly preserved; if they were weakened or destroyed by forceful and compulsive action on the part of God, just so far man would be weakened or would cease to be a man. This change, therefore, which is a change from spiritual death to spiritual life, is wrought in the man by God only when and only so far as the man works with God.

Let us now try to see how the selfish love of self is the source and centre of all evil; and how the love of self for the sake of others — which is the love of self vivified and made to be the love of others — is the source and centre of all good. Then we will consider how the change from the one love to the other is made. And we shall see that a principal means used by the divine mercy for this purpose is temptation.

We usually speak of selfishness, and of cruelty, revenge, avarice, and the like as separate and distinct sins. How is it then that selfishness is the source and centre of all of them? Of some, — as avarice, envy, covetousness, love of power and dominion, — this is obvious. We must look more carefully into others to see that it is so. Thus it is easily seen

that revenge is a passionate desire to punish an injury done to oneself, — which could not exist without the love of self, and is stronger as the love of self is stronger and the love of others weaker. To one who loved others as himself, revenge would be simply impossible. Then as to cruelty: this is the expression of hatred to others; and the love of self, if it does not become the love of others, or is not weakened and softened by this better love, easily grows into hatred of others. The love of others is a love to do them good, and finds pleasure in giving pleasure; but the love of self sometimes finds pleasure in giving pain. So far as one loves others he is in sympathy with them, and their pleasures are his pleasures, and their pain his pain, and cruelty to them would be cruelty to himself. But if selfishness is supreme in him, the pleasure of others excites in him only envy, and the pain of others makes the sense of his own ease and enjoyment more vivid, and so gives him pleasure. The Frenchman Rochefoucauld is one of the writers who have drawn the picture of merely human nature, and he has shown a deep insight into its abysses. He says there is something in the misfortunes of those dearest to us, which is not altogether painful! Let this direful feeling grow, and it becomes the cruelty which causes and enjoys the suffering of others. Then as to lust: what is it and what can it be, but the passion which

is given us to be in the form of wedded love, the exact opposite of the love of self alone, and therefore to be the inexhaustible spring and firm support of the purest happiness, but which passion becomes lust when it is perverted and polluted by a self-love which sacrifices to its accursed greed all that earth has most like to heaven. So we might go on and carry our analysis farther, and see that all the myriad monsters of sin, in all their boundless variety, have but one parentage, — the selfish love of self.

We have already said that this selfish love of self, in which is the origin of all sin, may be converted into the love of others. How this change may be made we will consider hereafter. Now let us look for a moment at the effect of the change; and we shall see this in the fact that all goodness finds its inexhaustible spring and its firm support in the love of self, when that has been converted into the love of self for the sake of others, or into the love of others.

If we imagine a man in whom this change has been so thoroughly wrought that his supreme and sovereign love is the love of others and the love of himself for the sake of others, we have a man who finds his best happiness in making others happy. Selfishness has gone from him. It has no influence upon his conduct or his character. If we have succeeded in showing that selfish love of self, or selfishness, is the parent of all sins, then we have shown

also that if selfishness be gone and wholly absent, there is no cause for sin,—nothing which could prompt it or offer to it welcome or nourishment if it entered into the mind.

But may not the goodness which springs from the absence of selfishness be merely neutral,—an inactive, ascetic, unproductive goodness? It would be this and only this, were not the love of self alive and active. For this love demands continual enjoyment; its hunger is as keen and constant when it has become the love of others, as in the most selfish of men; it will not let the man rest in still vacuity a moment; it insists upon gratification: this it must and will have; and because it is now the love of self for the sake of others, it finds its gratification in doing all the good it can to others, in all the ways which are open to it. Asceticism is abhorrent to it. There are none of the innocent enjoyments of life which it does not recognize as means of sustaining and enlarging its usefulness. Do we eat and drink with less relish, when we desire to sustain and invigorate the body as the instrument of usefulness? Do we enjoy the innocent recreations which offer themselves abundantly any less, because we find in them refreshment and restoration? If we have learned experimentally why the Lord has provided all these harmless enjoyments, and made them far more than harmless, we

cannot but have a clear and constant perception that our Father has made all the pleasures which human faculties can enjoy, such that they may be enjoyed innocently and wisely; and such that when so enjoyed they sustain, strengthen, and enlarge all these faculties, and enable them to be more and more efficient in giving to men their highest happiness, which is the happiness of loving and doing good. Well may this perception fill us with unfailing gratitude for the love, and wonder at the wisdom, which could so provide for His children.

Asceticism has been practised from the earliest times and under all religious systems. In the earliest days and in Eastern countries, it sent its votaries — rather its victims — into solitude and austerity of every kind. Quite early in Christian history, it made some pass years on the summit of a pillar, drove others into the wilderness, and peopled many monasteries and nunneries, which still exist in large numbers in the Roman Catholic Church. The very essence of asceticism is the avoidance of or escape from temptation, either by withdrawal from society, or by a renunciation of the common pleasures of life. This feeling is very common, and is manifested in various ways and degrees. The New Church regards it as a mistake. It holds that if sins are avoided in this way, in their stead may grow up the sin of self-pride and self-glorification. And even if

this effect does not follow, another must follow which is to be greatly deprecated. When sin is avoided in this way, it is by the suppression of most important elements in our nature. The whole man is maimed and crippled. He must pass into the other world such as he has made himself here; and that will be with intellectual and affectional capacities, which might have been the means of inexpressible and unending happiness, paralyzed beyond cure; or rather like the dead members of a living body.

And yet Divine Providence would not have permitted asceticism to prevail in all ages and all countries, as it has done, if it were not good for some, and even necessary for some. These are they who could not be strengthened so that they might effectually resist and put away sensuous and selfish sins, but might be so far enlightened that they would see the evil of these sins, and so far helped that, conscious of their weakness, they would fly from them into solitude and self-suppression. It is to such as these that our Lord speaks, when He says "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." But

how much better is it to remember that only in the world can the selfish love of the world be converted into the love of the world for the sake of the neighbor; only in the active performance of uses can the unselfish love of our neighbor grow up. We shall be in no danger of enjoying the pleasures of sense and of society too much while they are wholly innocent, if we take care that they never interfere with duty, or lessen our ability to do our duty; and if there underlies all this enjoyment a profound conviction that these innocent pleasures are the gift of Him who in all He gives us, whether of pain or of pleasure, cannot but seek to make us more and more His instruments for good.

Let us turn to the intellectual effect of victory in temptation. Here, the first thing to remember is that every desire and every affection prompts and causes the thought which belongs to it, and which suggests and guides the effort to satisfy it. On the largest scale the divine wisdom exists as one with and the guide of the divine love. In every-day life we know that our wishes prompt our thoughts, and that our thoughts guide our wishes to their own fulfillment. Every affection suggests the thought or the truth which agrees with it. This law applies to our love of others, and enlightens that love by the wisdom which belongs to it; and it causes all evil affections to fill the mind with the falsities which belong

to and justify them. This wisdom guides the mind gradually to a perception which grows ever more clear, that the Lord Himself, as the giver not only of life but of all good, is the worthiest object of love. And as that love grows in purity and strength, so the wisdom which belongs to it grows, until both concur together in making us love the Lord our God with all the heart and soul. But we may gain clearer ideas of the effect of the change from a selfish love of self to the love of self for the sake of others, — or, to express the same thing more briefly, from a love of self to the love of others, — by gaining clearer ideas of what may be called the theory of creation.

All life is from the Lord, who alone is life. It is given by the Lord to man by influx from Him. This phrase is used not because it is adequate, but because it is the best we have. Most assuredly life does not flow into us as water flows from a spring or reservoir into a recipient vessel. We might use the words “infuse,” or “impart,” or “communicate.” But, on the whole, “influx” comes nearer than any other word which our language gives us to lead our minds to a perception of the manner in which whatever has life receives it from the Lord; and in the same way we may call all living beings vessels receptive of life.

In the life thus given and received, self-love is an inherent and essential element. We see it in all

the degrees and forms of life. A tree lives because it is in the constant effort to nourish itself from the earth, the air, and the sun. In animals, this is still plainer. They live only for self and what belongs to self, as their children do. But it is in man as inevitable, constant, and permanent, as in animals and vegetables. And by reason of this self-love every being is distinctly itself and only itself; and this is true even where there is no consciousness of self, as in vegetables, or only a dim and clouded consciousness, as in animals. This self-love is at first always and necessarily selfish; but the purpose of the life thus given requires that this self-love be changed, in man, into the love of others, by his own efforts in co-operation with the divine operation. Let us now look at the means and the methods in and by which this change can be made.

Divine influx is two-fold; by which is meant that divine life flows into man to become his human life in two different ways. One way is by immediate influx. This means that the Lord flows directly into all men,—in common into all, and specifically into each,—and vivifies all and each, giving to every one life, and ever sustaining and preserving life, and with life the possibility of quality and character. And then these come by mediate influx. This mediate influx is wrought out through one of the universal laws of life. This law is, that every one

who lives is in the constant effort to communicate his life. This law is infinite in the Lord; and its constant and infinite operation causes, continues, and supports creation. Because it is essentially in the divine life, it is in that life as it flows into man, and is in all men, though in some it may be so hidden or disguised by selfishness that it can scarcely be discerned. To those who have passed from earth it belongs fully, and to those whose characters are determined and who are in heaven or in hell, most fully. Their effort is constant to impart their life wherever they can; and Divine Providence has so ordered human nature in all its forms and relations that these good and evil spirits have access to man. The association of spirits with each other is governed by affinity: like always seeking like. This law has much force among men in this world; in heaven and in hell it is sovereign. The association of spirits with men is governed by this law. Good spirits seek and animate whatever they can find in men, of good which is like their own. Evil spirits seek and animate whatever they can find in men, of evil like their own.

Men inherit from all their ancestors whatever those ancestors made their own. Therefore, in addition to the self-love into which they were born as a vital element of human nature, they are born also with a proclivity to every sin which belonged to any

of their ancestors. These are now innumerable, and we may be said to be born into a proclivity to all sins. Hence, evil spirits of all kinds find in all men something which attracts them to men and exposes men to them. If this attraction of affinity exerted its full force, without check or control, the hostile hosts whom it drew upon men would have it all their own way, and men would become of necessity just what their assailants were. But here Divine Providence interposes. Because man is in this matter defenceless, the Lord defends him. For while he never regenerates man except with man's co-operation, He is perpetually exerting His power and His wisdom to do for man all that man cannot do for himself, and all that in any way assists or enables man to "work out his salvation." Man has no power to prevent the access to him of any evil spirits who find in him evil like their own. Therefore the Lord does all this work for him. He never admits to any man any evil spirits but those whom man may have power to conquer if he wills to resist them. By the evil spirits thus permitted to assail man, so much of the evil in which he was born is animated and made active as may be overcome by him, and in that way become an instrument of his regeneration.

As all the evil of his ancestry is inherited by man, not as actual evil but as a proclivity to evil, so all

their goodness is inherited by him, not as actual goodness but only as a tendency to goodness, or, as it may be called, natural goodness, which can only become spiritual goodness or the man's own, when he wills it, chooses it, and loves it. But while it is in man only a tendency to good, it attracts good spirits to him by the law of affinity and brings him in some measure within their reach. But a far more important means for the access of angels is that which Swedenborg calls "remains." During infancy and childhood, while there is as yet the innocence of ignorance and immaturity, the Lord is able to impress upon the memory the simpler and yet more vital truths of religion, — as the existence and goodness of God, — and to excite various states of innocence and charity, of love towards parents, relatives, friends, and teachers, of mercy and kindness to the poor and suffering, and the like. These thoughts and states remain in the mind and heart, perhaps hidden too deep for consciousness, but carefully preserved by Divine Providence, to be ever after the means by which this or that good influence may flow into the mind and heart in which these "remains" lie concealed.

Here are innumerable ways opened by which spirits good and bad, of every kind and almost every measure, find access to every man. Some of both kinds are admitted by Divine Providence to

approach man and infuse into him, from their own qualities and characters, all that is needed to sustain his personal life and constitute its quality and character.

These influences come to him from heaven and from hell. They are always perfectly controlled by Divine Providence, and exquisitely adjusted so as to balance and equilibrate each other, in such wise that his spiritual freedom is nearly always maintained, and he can turn himself to the one or to the other. It is said *nearly* always; for there are cases of insanity, and of passion raging until it becomes insane, and of such irresistible influence as used to be called "possession." But these cases are exceptional, and are regulated to good issues by the wisdom and the love which embrace all things.

The prevailing and nearly constant state of every man is one in which his spiritual freedom is preserved, whereby he may choose between the opposing influences at work within him, and determine for himself which he will accept, appropriate, and permit to become a part of his own life. Then the work of infinite love and wisdom is ever going on, without exception and without intermission, to lead, induce, and assist him to make in his own freedom a rightful choice, — to choose good rather than evil, heaven and not hell. And foremost among the means which this love and wisdom make use of to this end is temptation.

We began this paper by saying that temptation is always conflict. We have just seen how tendencies to good and proclivities to evil are actuated and animated in every man. The conflict is between them. The issue in every temptation is, Shall the particular evil engaged in that conflict, or the opposing good which seeks to overcome and expel the evil, be triumphant, and by the victory be implanted in the character? The issue in the whole mass of temptation which a man passes through in life is, Shall good or evil, on the whole, possess the sovereign rule in the character, and dominate the whole.

Temptations do not come at hazard, as circumstances may open the way for them. They are permitted to come when they may be useful, and as they may be useful. However varied in kind or in aspect, they are one in their end and purpose. That purpose always is to give to man an opportunity of combating some evil tendency, and of putting it away by resistance. They are always perfectly adjusted to the man's character, to his needs at the moment, and to his possibilities of improvement. It follows that they are infinitely diversified in kind and in measure, for they must cover the whole possible range of human character.

They may be conveniently divided into those which we may call external or natural temptations, and

those we may call internal or spiritual temptations. This division is not exactly accurate or susceptible of precise definition. But it will suffice for purposes of consideration.

We call external temptations those which affect directly and mainly external conduct. For example, we have a divine commandment not to steal. Every man breaks this commandment in fact, if he is willing to seem wiser and better, stronger or richer, than he is, or any thing but what he is. For he then wishes to steal the good opinion of his neighbor. Do not all of us try to steal in this sense, continually? and very seldom do we think of it as a moral wrong or as something to be avoided as a sin. Then, in their dealings with each other most men would call themselves honest because they avoid gross and palpable cheating. But there are not many who know the inherent tendency of the natural man to appropriate what does not belong to him so well that they are constantly on their guard against it, and watchful never to take an undue advantage of their neighbor in any way whatever.

But suppose an opportunity presents itself to some man to possess himself of something belonging to his neighbor which he earnestly desires, and to do this easily and without danger of detection. Here is a temptation to steal, and some spirit who has confirmed himself in this sin, and in the love of it,

infuses the desire to steal. An angel who has learned to hate this sin, awakes the man's conscience, and brings the commandment to his mind. The man stands then face to face with himself on this point. Let us suppose him to resist, resolutely; then he overcomes and puts this temptation and him who inspired it under his feet. If he resists only because he is sure that honesty is the best policy, and that he shall lose more by stealing than he can gain, morally he does not gain much: but still he does gain something, for the devils of stealing have less power over him if he never indulges in the ultimate act of theft. If he abstains only because the consciousness that he was a thief would inflict a mortal blow upon his pride, it may be that he gains a little and but very little more. Only when he conquers in this temptation because he discovers his propensity to commit this sin, and refuses to commit the sin because it is a sin against God, does he drive this enemy of his soul away. Let him persist, and he closes the door against this devil; or, rather, through the door which this devil opened, an angel of honesty may come in and dwell with him. He has taken one step in the way of regeneration. Let him persist, and higher thoughts come to him and a more interior conflict begins. He becomes more watchful over his conduct, more earnest in his

efforts to deal with his neighbor as he should think it right that his neighbor should deal with him. Let him go still forward in this ascending path, and he becomes watchful not merely over his conduct but over his thoughts and inclinations. When he feels himself disposed to seem better than he is, or to refuse to do full justice to his neighbor in thought as well as act, he recognizes either of these dispositions as a temptation, and resists it as a temptation to sin. Still this path ascends before him. If he goes on he may find every step resisted. He can take the step only by combat with and victory over his spiritual enemies. Well are they armed from the armory of his natural and selfish love of self; for there they find proclivities to every thing that is false and evil, and opposition to every thing true and good. But with the help that can be and is given him, if he will receive it, he can conquer in these combats; and if he does, he will go forward and upward until he reaches the very summit of honesty, or until he has a clear perception that he does injustice to the Lord his Heavenly Father, when he does not ascribe unto Him, and unto the life flowing from His love and wisdom, all the good and all the truth that is in him. And with a clear perception of this truth he has a love for it which he holds in his heart of hearts.

By a similar analysis of other sins and of the methods and the means of salvation from them, we

might see by what steps man may rise from a refusal to commit murder, first, to refuse to harbor a thought of murder, and afterwards to such an effectual suppression of every feeling or thought of anger or ill-will against his brother, as would let into his mind and heart influences from angels who live in the love of the neighbor, and whose work it is to suppress all that opposes that love, and to lift it up until it finds in love to the Lord Himself its source and foundation, and its perfection.

So, too, with the deadly sin of adultery. Let this be resisted in all its forms and degrees, in all the monstrous brood of sins which are born of it, and under all the disguises it assumes,—let it be resisted in thought and act to the very end, and what words could present to the mind a picture of the purity, the love, and happiness which would take the place of all these sins and their misery, or what mental sight could endure the full radiance of such a picture!

And every step in all spiritual progress is taken by means of temptation in some of its indefinite diversity of forms. For no step forward can be taken without resisting evil; and no evil propensity can be resisted without its resisting the influence that would put it away. Here, then, there must be combat. Wherever there is this spiritual combat, there is temptation, for this is what temptation means.

It has been said more than once that temptations are of all kinds. If merely external temptations affect mainly the conduct and the externals of the mind, there are temptations of all degrees, from the merely external to those which penetrate so deeply that they seem to stir up the very foundations of life. Let us now try to consider these deeper temptations.

We may be helped in this consideration by looking again at what is told us concerning the young man who "came running" to our Lord, earnestly inquiring "what he should do that he might have eternal life," and when he was told, "went away grieved because he had great possessions," — or, as in another Gospel, "he was very rich." When Jesus saw that, He was very sorrowful, and said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And his disciples were astonished at his words." And again, "His disciples were exceedingly amazed, saying, who then can enter into the kingdom of God?" Is it not obvious that by these riches, or great possessions, were meant spiritual riches; or goodness and truth, and the consciousness of them? If it were not so, how could the disciples be astonished at the statement, that it would be hard for a rich man to enter into heaven? How could they ask, "Who then can be saved?" Is not the answer obvious: "The poor, who are very much

more numerous than the rich." What can there be surprising to any one in the statement, "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God," if by riches are meant literal and worldly riches; for how difficult it must be for them on whom the cares and pleasures and seductions of wealth press heavily, to cast them all aside and choose the way of righteousness! But well may one be amazed if he is told that they who have the riches of obedience to the commandments will find it hard to enter the kingdom of God. But when our Lord makes what seems to be the explanatory statement, "how hard is it for them who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God," it now becomes difficult to consider the riches spoken of as spiritual riches. Indeed, what can there be more amazing, than the saying that it must be hard for them who have obeyed the commandments from youth up, and who have all the goodness of obedience to the commandments, to enter into heaven? If "riches" here represent and signify spiritual riches, or goodness and knowledge, and we are told that we cannot trust to them to bear us to heaven, well may we ask, What then can we trust to, or who then can be saved? Do not all religions agree in the requirement of goodness as the condition of happiness hereafter, and in valuing spiritual instruction because it teaches how to be

good? Can our Lord in this parable so contradict the tenor of all His words, as to declare that goodness and knowledge have no efficacy in securing us eternal life? Certainly not. But it is always true that external goodness may be wholly ineffectual, because selfishness, pride of self, and trust in self may have full sway even where there is obedience to the commandments; and such spiritual riches as this would find it hard to enter into the kingdom of God. We shall advert again to this "rich young man," who could not bear to become poor at the command of the Master whom he sought.

The salvation we should desire is not salvation from the punishment of sin, or from the consequences of the sins we have committed, but from the sinfulness which led us to commit them and makes us love them. It is salvation from sinful propensities or tendencies and sinful character. It is a change from the love and enjoyment of sin into such a hatred of it, that the very thought of it, either as what we have done or may be impelled to do, is painful. In the language of Scripture we loathe ourselves because of our iniquities.

All sins and all tendencies to sin, of all kinds and degrees, are as we have seen resolvable into the selfish love of self and the love of the world founded on that love of self; and all of them spring from these loves. Salvation from them means the substitution

for these evil loves of their opposites, — love to the Lord and love of the neighbor founded on love to the Lord. It is regeneration which causes this substitution, this change of heart and life; and this operates salvation. Then we enable our Creator to give us of Himself and of His own happiness; for when man loves good and the doing of good supremely, he enables the Lord to inflow into man's will with His divine love, and into his understanding with the wisdom which belongs to and guides this love, which love and wisdom together *are* Him. Even if these are received by man in the measure in which he may receive them, and remaining in him unperturbed constitute him a good and happy man, self-love is still the basis of this good man's life; for it is and must ever remain the basis of human life. Why, then, do we speak of self-love as if it were essentially and altogether a bad thing? The answer we have already made is, that self-love is this evil thing and this source of all evil so long as it remains what it is primarily, — the love of self for the sake of self. It is given to all men as the foundation of character, for without it man would have no personality or individuality, and would not be himself. That he may be himself, he is endowed with self-love. But that he may become heavenly in character and therefore happy, he is endowed with the power of making his love

of self become the love of self for the sake of others. This power is constantly preserved in and for him; and Divine Providence, in all its government of his life and its circumstances, seeks to lead him to this result, or to a rightful exercise of this power; to lead him always and assist him always in every possible way, but never to force or compel him: for if there were any such force or compulsion there could not be freedom, and if freedom were destroyed, the man would be destroyed; for, whatever he might become, he would no longer be a man. Selfhood, we repeat, or ownhood of one's self, is of the essence of manhood, and belongs to it as that without which manhood is not. Selfhood implies and means that the love of self is the constant basis of character. But with this selfhood is given to man, as essentially his, the power of making his love of self become, with his own choice and free consent, a love of self for the sake of others; and this is a love of others. This work of choosing good is the work of God within him; but it is a work which God can do only through the man's own freedom of will, free choice, and free co-operation. For God has given to man perfect power to choose evil rather than good; and therefore, in that sense, man's choice of good rather than evil is his own work. But it is a work which can be done only when God and man work together.

For this work, temptations are among the most efficient means which God employs, because they are means whereby man may work together with Him. In temptations, and by them, man learns what he is; sees, sometimes to his dismay, how selfish, sensual, and sinful in act or in will he is, how wofully his natural propensities have deceived him, what they have led him to be and to do, and whither they will bear him along if not resisted and overcome.

Who, when these propensities to evil, and this love of self and these impurities become known to him, has not been assailed by the doubt whether there can be a God; or whether He who has permitted these germs of sin and of misery to be implanted in his soul, can be good and wise. But a careful consideration of this momentous question will lead him to the conclusion that, had love to God been made the dominant and exclusive element in man's nature, this love, from which comes all the highest happiness of which a human being is capable, could never have been man's own, as it now may be; it could not have become that which he had himself chosen, freely and voluntarily; it could not have been by free and conscious adoption and appropriation, and persistent determination, made to be his own and a part of himself. Never could he have known the happiness of working in perfect freedom with God;

never could he have felt in every hour of an unending eternity that perfect love was working with him, and in him, to confirm and enlarge his capacity of happiness; never could he have known, as he now may, the unimaginable goodness which is ever seeking to fill the home which He has enabled His child to build in heaven, with ever growing light and love.

With the freedom of choice, of will, and of life given to him; there was also given, first, the necessity that every amendment of character from the beginning should be wrought by man's own acceptance of the help and leading of God; and, secondly, that from an humble and feeble beginning, the love of self, instead of being the source of all evil, becomes the foundation and support of all good. If it becomes this, it must do so gradually, beginning from the first and feeblest emotions of good, — mere scintillations of a life better and higher than a merely natural life. But, from this beginning, regenerated self-love may advance along an ascending path, which will have for its measure and its limitation only infinity and eternity.

There is a universal tendency to look upon suffering as punishment; and one of the effects of this tendency is the disposition to believe that others who suffer what we are exempt from deserve that suffering, while we do not. Perhaps there are none

who, if they looked carefully into their own hearts, would not detect some feeling of this kind. It was this feeling which our Lord rebuked when He said : " Suppose ye that these Galileans [whom Pilate had slain] were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay! Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay!" And when His disciples asked him of a blind man, " Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, " Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents."

This impression, that bad men suffer and the good do not, is the opposite of the truth. Neither in this world nor in the other do any suffer who *cannot* be made better by the suffering. Divine punishment, unlike human punishment, has for its constant and only end the good of the sufferer. Like every other of the divine providences which govern life, all suffering is submitted to the spiritual freedom of men; and its effect is determined by them in that freedom. Sinfulness is universal, but suffering is one of the means by which we may be cleansed from the sinfulness whence it comes; and therefore suffering of some kind and some measure is universal. But it is always carefully adjusted to each man's state. They suffer less who could

not profit by more ; and they most who can profit by it most. So, too, in judging ourselves. When some great distress falls upon us, and we are sorely tempted and almost stricken down with the fear that we have brought it on ourselves by our especial sinfulness, let us rather hope that it comes because He who knows all things sees that this great sorrow may wash us clean from some great defilement. Then this temptation may help us to discern distinctly that defilement, and lead to earnest and persistent effort to co-operate with the providence which would cleanse us.

One of the greatest of possible mistakes is the belief that a man may be saved *in* his sins. Divine omnipotence, because it is one with divine wisdom, *cannot* save a man *in* his sins. One who holds the delusive faith that we are saved because our Saviour took the punishment of our sins upon Himself, may well wonder at the enormous suffering of human life. Why is that suffering inflicted when it is wholly unnecessary, inasmuch as the work of salvation has been done for us? But our Lord was named Jesus because He takes away our sins, not because He takes away the punishment for them. Every evil thing in us may be turned into the good of which it is the exact opposite, by resisting and overcoming the evil while it is as yet only a thing of thought or feeling; or, if this opportunity be lost, by sincere

repentance. It may, indeed, be doubted whether spiritual good is ever made one's own by voluntary choice and appropriation, unless by victory in the temptation which the evil thing that is the opposite of that good has brought upon us. Hence it is that we may say that temptation is indispensable, because without it salvation would be impossible.

How then can we utter the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation"? When we pray thus, do we not ask the Lord to withhold from us the very means of salvation?

We do not. This last petition of the Lord's Prayer forms, with the two clauses which follow and close the prayer, one sentence. It is a prayer not to be led into temptation, *but* to be delivered from evil, *for* (or because) the kingdom, the power, and the glory are the Lord's. This sentence describes the Sabbath of the soul, and is a prayer to be brought into the rest and peace of that Sabbath; it is a prayer that temptations may cease because their work is done, and that we may have the peace which comes when temptations have done all their work. In heaven there is something like temptation, for we are told that when an angel's perception that all there is in him of good or of life is from the Lord, grows dim, his former states of mind come back, until he sees that of himself he is nothing, and that all evil and falsity come from his natural

love of self. When he sees this, his heavenly states return. Still, it must be a general truth that in heaven there is little or no temptation. The reason is that there the kingdom, the power, and the glory are the Lord's. The kingdom is His, because He is the Lord and Master of all who are there. The power is His, because all the strength and faculty they have are known to be His. The glory is His, because He is acknowledged as the author and giver from Himself of all good, all truth, and all happiness. Where this is so, there is heaven; there only temptation cannot come; then and there only "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

In every step in this progressive change from the love of self to the love of others, or from evil to good, man is helped forward by victory in temptations. They are therefore, as has been already said, indefinitely diversified in measure as well as in kind, from the lowest and most external to the inmost and the deepest.

In each one of these temptations, man must conquer or be conquered, for one or other of these results must take place. Whatever the temptation was, whether slight or grievous, it is certain that the Providence which governs the whole of every man's life would not have permitted it to cross his path unless he could conquer in it; nor unless it was the best

if not the only way in which the man could know and resist, and so suppress, *that* propensity to evil. If he does not resist, but yields and indulges that propensity, it grows stronger, and he goes downward. If he does resist, and effectually, this propensity is weakened, and he goes upward; and so far as every propensity to sin is weakened and removed, the good influences which are pressing to enter in whenever they can, now can and do enter: by these the opposite love of good is introduced into the character, or, if it be there, is strengthened.

Temptations of this kind beset all men through all their lives. But they are external; that is, they relate to external conduct, and, in the language of the New Church, to the external man. Indeed, Swedenborg seldom gives to them the name of temptations, although to them alone is that name given in the common theologies of the day. The reason of this difference is that temptations of a deeper kind, which reach much farther in their consequences, but which are obscurely and imperfectly recognized in the Christian churches that are now passing away, are regarded in the New Church as of far greater importance, and dealt with far more fully, than these external temptations. What these higher, deeper, and more searching temptations are, we can understand only as we understand the life and happiness of heaven; for their whole purpose

is to help man to this life and happiness. Because nothing was known in those churches, and the belief prevailed that nothing definite could be known, concerning the happiness of heaven, nothing was definitely known or thought of concerning the nature and operation of those interior temptations of which it was the purpose and effect to prepare man for heaven by making him capable of its happiness.

Throughout the universe, all living beings live by receiving life from Him who is life itself and the centre and source of all life, each receiving life in his own way, and in accordance with his own interior form. In heaven, this is true as it is elsewhere; but there, they who receive life from Him know that they do. And it is this knowledge which is the cause and groundwork of their happiness; for they know this so well, that they have a clear and constant perception that at every instant the Lord is giving them of His own life to be their life. His life is love and wisdom; and so far as each of them who are in heaven has been prepared to receive this life unimpaired and unperturbed, so far was he prepared for heaven; and so far does each angel receive, each according to the inmost structure of his soul which determines his capacity of reception, this divine life to become his own unimpaired and unperturbed. The Lord's love is love

of others, and His wisdom is the wisdom which belongs to that love and guides it, and is one with it. He is Almighty, and His omnipotence is ever moved by that love and guided by that wisdom; and therefore He is ever active in good, ever active in creating and sustaining the universe. All His attributes are infinite; and the divine happiness is infinite, because it consists in the exercise of that love according to that wisdom, in doing good constantly, universally, and infinitely. This is His happiness; and because He has been able to make the angels receive into their own wills and understandings His love and wisdom, to be without perversion and by their own free choice their love and their wisdom, He is also able to impart to them of His own happiness: and this is their happiness, and the happiness of heaven. Happiness consists in them as it does in Him, in the love of good and in doing good; and it is this in them because it is this in Him, for it is His happiness which is given them to be their happiness. If we ask why and how it is that all temptations, even the most interior and most painful, may be if we will let them be the means of making us receptive of heavenly happiness, we solve this problem when we see how temptations of all kinds promote the conversion of a love of self for the sake of self into a love of self for the sake of others; for they change a merely natural and selfish love into the love which reigns in heaven.

The resistance to evil in external conduct may go on to any extent. We may imagine one who has overcome all the tendency to sin which he knows of, until he is what God declared Job to be when He suffered him to fall into the hands of Satan, "a *perfect* and upright man, who feareth God and escheweth evil." He may have done this from "his youth upward," like the rich young man. And then comes the marvel! He is now, by the very fact of his goodness, brought into a great danger. It is this very goodness, these spiritual riches, which make it "hard for him to enter into the kingdom of heaven." The selfish love of self has retreated into its stronghold, its citadel, and there and there alone must be attacked, if it is to be completely and finally overcome. And here it is to be attacked by appropriate temptations.

When one has overcome in the external temptation to do evil, then comes the danger of thinking he has done this in his own strength, and not in the strength given him from the Lord himself. So far as he thinks thus, he strengthens and magnifies his selfish love of self, and exalts his opinion of himself, and worships himself, and is his own God. In other words, he intensifies to the highest degree his natural love of self. There can be no deeper selfishness, none which is the more exact opposite and the more profound antagonist of that love to

God which is the source of all good. Hence there are no temptations which are sharper and which strike deeper than those which expose this fearful love of self, would humble it, and substitute for it love to the Lord. As the central truth of all truth is that which tells us that our life is but the constant and incessant gift of the divine life, so there is no falsity so intense and profound as that which tells us that we live from ourselves, and that our goodness and our wisdom are self-derived. And no temptations strike so heavily as those which strike at the heart of this falsity, and would substitute for it a living conviction that all the truth we have is of the divine wisdom, and all the good we have is of the divine goodness, and that they are ours only because they are given us by Him who is love itself.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions;” there are all degrees and measures of happiness. But there is no happiness, unless the selfish love of self and of the world has been in some good measure converted into love to the Lord and love of the neighbor. It is the constant effort of Divine Providence with all men to effect this change as far as it may be possible. Therefore temptations are of every kind, and are always perfectly adjusted to the needs and capacities of him who is tempted. They begin with the most external, for at the beginning these only would be useful. These which

affect only conduct, if they are permitted to do their work of amending the external life, prepare the way for temptations which affect belief, motive, and internal character. Often the effect of temptations, if good resists and conquers evil, is to make those temptations less needed, but to open the way for somewhat deeper temptations. Let us not forget that the purpose of all temptation is to promote regeneration ; and the effect of all advance in regeneration is to cause some progress in the change from that love of self for the sake of self, which is natural to all men and a component element in all human nature, into that love of self for the sake of others, which is spiritual and not natural, which can come only as it is learned, and which is learned by all who make a rightful use of the temptations which beset them.

Our Lord was tempted as we cannot be. Of His temptations no human thought can think, no human words can speak, adequately. And yet He said to His disciples, "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations." In His temptations, all the powers of hell were admitted to Him. The human nature which He put on was full of evil, inherited from the long line of ancestry in whom were accumulated all the perversions and corruptions of which the natural love of self was capable. In all He conquered ; so perfectly, so absolutely

that the whole of that inherited evil was put away from the assumed human, and perfect good took the place of all evil, and the human itself became divine. To us, but a small part of this is possible. But, by the divine mercy, no other spiritual enemies are permitted to assail us but those which we may overcome by strength which will be given to us if we are willing to receive it. So far as we overcome them, they leave us; bearing their burdens of falsehood, evil, and woe with them; and in their stead goodness and truth and a capacity for happiness are given us. This process may go on indefinitely, so long and so far as we take up our cross and follow our Lord; but this work can never in us be perfect or infinite, as it was in Him.

It is said in the gospel of John, "For the Holy Ghost was not yet." The word "given" is added in our received text, in italics, to show that it was not in the original. The Holy Ghost, or Spirit, came into full activity afterwards,—that is, after the work of our Lord on earth was finished, and His human nature was fully glorified or made divine.

Possibly this fact may help us to understand why His incarnation and glorification took place. The New Church is taught that the divine Trinity consists of the Father who is infinite love, the Son who is the wisdom of that love, and the Holy Spirit who is the operation or action of the divine love and

wisdom. This operation, or action, is creation; and as it caused the universe, must be as old as the creation, or the universe. And yet the divine Trinity became, after the glorification of the human, other than it was before; because by this glorification the Son — who, as the Word, was with God and was God from the beginning — acquired a new existence and a new instrument in the human made divine, and through this new instrument worked or operated as never before. Hence this Holy Spirit, or new mode of action of the divine, was not, until after the glorification of the assumed human. Let us try to see what this means, so far as relates to the regeneration of man.

All human life is divine life given to men, and so become human. This life we have already seen is given directly and indirectly, or immediately and mediately; directly, from the Source of life, and indirectly through the various planes of life which proceed in successive degrees from the Creator. Life is given to all men in both ways, but not quality or character; for by the law which lies at the foundation of human nature, man must determine his own quality and character. This he does because there is this indirect or mediate influx, which comes from the divine source of life through angels and spirits of all kinds. Those in affinity with what is good in man are drawn to him by this

affinity. At the same time, spirits in affinity with what is evil in him are drawn to him by that affinity. The life flowing into him through these mediums is affected and qualified by them; and from them the man chooses what he will for the nutriment and growth of his own life. But there is much more than this.

The Lord is ever in the effort to strengthen the good influence which thus comes within man's reach, so far as He may do this without impairing his spiritual freedom; and then to lead him to choose this good influence rather than its opposite, and by this choice make good the prevalent law of his life. But before the incarnation and glorification of His assumed human, there was no perfect medium through which life could flow from the Lord to man, so qualified as to be within man's own voluntary choice and appropriation, and yet such as would lead him gradually from a natural to a spiritual condition. The angelic heaven was the only instrumentality by means of which the Lord could do this work. The incarnation and glorification of the assumed human provided the Lord with a new and perfect instrument in that human, when it was glorified and made divine.

It would be impossible for us to form any just idea of the relations between God and man, if we forget for a moment the law which underlies all

those relations,—and that is the law of human freedom. The effect of this law is that the character of every man, and his destiny as a consequence of his character, must be worked out by himself in his freedom. This is a law of human nature. It was the law of the human nature assumed from Mary; just as much the law of that nature as of the nature of one of us. By reason of this law and as a necessary effect of it, the evil propensities of the assumed nature were resisted, overcome, and put away *by* that nature, but *from* the divine within; that is, by that nature in the exercise of its own free choice,—the power of freely choosing under all trials and temptations, and the power of carrying this choice into effect, being always given from the Father within. By this means, that is by victory in all temptations, the assumed nature was made divine, and united in perfect oneness with the Father. Henceforward and for ever, the Word, which in the beginning was God, is also man; in the strictest and most exact sense, man. The Father dwells in a human nature which was glorified and made divine, by victory in temptation over all devils. The operation or activity of the divine love and wisdom henceforward go on by and through a new instrumentality. Let any man ever be tempted in any way, this divine action, or the Holy Spirit, comes to him and helps him as with a

divine-human experience. The divine comes to him through a human which has been there where he is now; for the germs of all sins were in that human, and by temptations which embraced all temptations they were resisted and overcome. Heretofore these saving influences came to man as they come now, from the divine. But the law of human personality and human freedom made it inevitable that they should come through a human nature which had fought and conquered in that battle; and this medium was found in the angelic heaven. But there the battle had been necessarily limited, and the victory imperfect. The very same law prevails to-day; but now these saving influences come through a medium, which has conquered perfectly in an all-embracing battle.

The Holy Ghost can now be given as it could not be before; and now this divine help is always all sufficient: but it is all sufficient to lead man if he is willing to be led, to strengthen him if he is willing to be strengthened, to give him the victory if he is or can be made willing to conquer. The Holy Ghost — the saving operation or action of the Divine Providence — is now full and perfect, because it is divine in its origin and has now a medium or instrument which is divine. But it is never oppressive, never forcible, never regardless of that fundamental law of human freedom on which all possibility of

heavenly happiness rests, because this medium is also human, — perfectly human as it is perfectly divine.

Our Lord was named “Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” Jesus, in Hebrew, is the same name with Joshua, being the Greek form of that name. The name of Joshua was at first Oshea, — “and Moses called Oshea, the Son of Nun, Jehoshua;” Numb. xiii. 16. That is, Moses added to the word Oshea the syllable Jeh. Oshea means “help” or “salvation.” The syllable Jeh, like the syllable Jah, is the same as Jehovah. Thence the name Jehoshua — or by contraction Joshua, which is the name Jesus — means “Jehovah my help,” or “Jehovah my salvation.” This is but an amplification of the statement that “He shall save His people from their sins.” That He came into the world to acquire new means for doing this, and that by the use of these means He saves all whom He can make willing to accept salvation, we have already endeavored to show.

Our Lord’s temptations were spiritual. Very seldom in these days do men advance so far that purely spiritual temptations are admitted to them. But it is often the case that external temptations become internal, or natural temptations become spiritual, in a degree; and this degree may vary from very slight to very large. So we may look at the effect of misfortune and suffering. The calamities

of life are never of themselves temptations, — not even natural temptations; but they are permitted to fall upon us that they may be useful to us when they only repress our misconduct by making it impossible. They may help us far more in proportion as they become spiritual temptations. They become so, when sickness and pain, loss of property, anxiety and grief, disappointed and defeated wishes, or the danger or fear of these or other misfortunes, make us look inward upon ourselves and perhaps upwards to another life. There are a thousand ways in which they do this. They may tell us of the worthlessness of this world's gifts; they may bring to mind sins or weaknesses, and help us to repent of them; they may suggest to us the utter uncertainty of all things, or rather the certainty that disappointment, vicissitude, and failure mingle with all things; they may suggest to us that we can have no assurance except in the care of Providence, and no abiding trust but in that care and love. They may lead us to ask of ourselves why we suffer so, and we may listen to the answer which bids us look for the causes into our own lives and hearts; and we may shrink back from what we see, with shuddering disgust. Or in some other of the innumerable ways in which the divine love knows how to reach us, these external temptations may do spiritual work, and help forward the change from the natural love

of self to the spiritual love of others, or from the love of self to the love of others.

We cannot see the Lord's face while He is passing; but when he has gone by, we may see Him. Whether our suffering has done for us and in us the work it was intended to do, we cannot know until it has passed away. For this work is not done, if we avoid the proclivities to evil which we have discovered only while the forceful and compulsive influence of these calamities, or the memory or the fear of them, remains with us. We must wait until our freedom is restored to us, for only then are we again ourselves, and only then can we know what we ourselves are. And it may be that we shall be obliged to pass through many such experiences, gaining a little in each, before the whole work which our Father sees to be possible for us is accomplished.

Our Father is infinite, and in His care for us regards primarily our infinite interests. We know, when we will think, that the slightest gain in the capacity for happiness, if it be eternal, outweighs and outmeasures all suffering which is for a time only. "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Because our Father's love is perfect, He would have every instant of our lives, here or hereafter, happy. But because His love is wise, He always subordinates

our temporal enjoyments to our eternal happiness ; that is, we are only as happy here as a supreme and constant care for our happiness hereafter permits. Our eternal interests are regarded in the first place, and to them every thing gives way ; so that every thing in our condition or circumstances is always what is best for us eternally, whatever it may cost us of temporal suffering. This suffering, whether it be great and persistent, covering all life with its heavy cloud, or slighter and only occasional, is precisely what may best promote our eternal welfare. Sometimes a man can for a time do nothing but suffer and be very wretched, for the night has come, "when no man can work." The night may be long, and while it lasts the sufferer may be wholly unable to refer his suffering to any external cause, or to see any thing of its spiritual effect. It may drive him to despair, and it may seem to him that the very gates of hell are open before him. But by and in that darkness and suffering the Lord is very near to him, is present with him, and may be making great changes in his internal state and condition ; and the reason why he is permitted to suffer so much and so long is that he is such that by that suffering these changes may be made in him. We have already said that when our Lord washed His disciples' feet, He did symbolically what He is ever doing, or in the effort to do, spiritually, for all.

While doing it, He said to them, "what I do thou knowest not now, but shalt know hereafter." Let him who suffers during such a season of night and storm, take these words home to himself; and when the morning breaks, in this world or the other, and his active powers are restored to him, he will then work rejoicingly with the Divine Providence, and in that strength which can then be given to him, and in his own freedom, drive the devils away.

Temptations are always intended to afford to man an opportunity of working with God. But man may always refuse to do this. He may take the side of the devil, and work with him. He does this if he falls in the temptation, and sins; he has made it harder for himself to resist that evil and wipe that sin away by repentance. But repentance is always possible. The natural selfhood of man includes proclivities to all possible perversions and corruptions of the love of self; that is, all possible sins. Far, very far the larger part of this proclivity never comes to our consciousness: it would overwhelm us if it did. It remains ever latent; for evil spirits are not permitted to actuate and animate any part of this proclivity to evil, that we cannot overcome and suppress when it comes into our consciousness, if we will. We may either remove the evil from us by resistance, or appropriate it, and so make it a part of our life by indulgence.

The best thing we can do, and very much the best thing we can do, is to resist and suppress it while it is only a thing of thought and feeling, and thereby prevent it from being a thing of action. In one of the Psalms occurs language, often cited by opponents of the Bible, as expressive of the most savage cruelty: "O daughter of Babylon, happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!" Stones here as elsewhere in the Bible denote truths; and most happy is he who lays hold of the little ones of Babylon while they are yet little, and have not grown into strength and maturity, and dashes them against the truths which expose and rebuke them! If this is not done, they must be encountered at a later period when they have more vigor, and it may be harder to overcome them. But if they are not overcome, what then? Then there is sin. Evils which were only unknown propensities, latent and therefore harmless, have become not only animated, but adopted or appropriated by us, and made by our own choice a part of our life. And again, what then?

Then the divine mercy opens to us the way of repentance, if He can make us willing to walk in it. And much does our Father say in His Word to comfort and encourage the repentant sinner. Can repentance restore the innocence lost by sin? Certainly not. But there is another innocence. There

is first the innocence of infancy, which is the innocence of ignorance. And there is the innocence which, if it knows what sin is, has not been tempted to commit sin, or has been tempted and has overcome. But this innocence is lost, to be found never more, when the sin has been committed, perhaps repeatedly, in full freedom, and with the self-appropriation of that freedom. But even then there may be repentance, entire and thorough repentance. Perhaps through the long course of sinfulness, warnings were not wanted, and impressions of the evil of the sin were made from time to time. The good influences which would gladly suppress that sin did not slumber, but were on the watch for an opportunity to exert all their force. At length this opportunity comes. A change may take place in the man. Something of disappointment or of suffering may open the eyes to see the truth more clearly, or the heart to feel its own depravity. Then comes the temptation. It is not now merely a temptation to commit that sin, but it is a conflict between the love of the sin, confirmed as it is by indulgence, and the truths which tell us how infernal that sin is, and the better feelings which now shrink and shudder at our own depravity. In this conflict, which must be painful and may be long, good at last may conquer evil. In this hour repentance bears its fruits. The love of that sin

passes away, and hatred of it takes its place. We love now the exact opposite of that sin. We look back with wonder that we could have fallen so low, and with greater wonder that the divine mercy could have lifted us from such an abyss. We remember with thankfulness the sorrow we have endured, the bitter cup of which we have drunk; and we would welcome a cup of tenfold bitterness rather than fall again under the dominion of that sin.

Here, then, is a new innocence; and it is the fruit of repentance. It is not now the innocence of ignorance or immaturity; but it may be stronger than that innocence which is lost for ever. Experience has sadly proved, concerning that earlier innocence, that it was feeble and would fall when assailed. But the innocence that is born of repentance is made stronger by experience. We know now what we are; we know that only divine help could have saved us. And surely we may hope that this all-sufficient help will never fail, and that with this help our new innocence will never fall before its infernal assailants.

Once, when our Lord was at meat in a Pharisee's house, a woman "which was a sinner stood at his feet weeping, and washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them." When His Pharisaic host saw this, he could not believe that

our Lord knew that she was a sinner, for he thought that if He had known this He would not have permitted her to touch Him. And Jesus answering to his thought said unto him, "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other five pence. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most. Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, thou hast rightly judged. . . . Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. . . . And he said to the woman, Go in peace."

"Many that are last shall be first, and the first last." These words of our Lord are in Matthew connected with the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, of whom he that came late received the same wages as he that came early; in Mark, with the story of the young man who kept the commandments from his youth upward and then turned away; in Luke, with the series of parables of the barren fig-tree that was suffered to live one year more; of the daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound for eighteen years; of the grain of mustard seed which grew into a tree; of the leaven *hid* in the meal till the whole was leavened; and with

that parable which closes thus, "And they shall come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God."

Every sin may be repented of, and upon repentance forgiven. And yet our Lord says, in each of the first three Gospels, that there is a sin which can never be forgiven; and that is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

What is this dreadful sin? In Luke xii. 10, this fearful declaration against this sin follows "He that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." In Matthew xii., it follows immediately upon the assertion by the Pharisees that "by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, he casteth out devils." In Mark iii. 29, it follows the same words of the Pharisees, and as if to show distinctly the purpose and meaning of this denunciation of the sin against the Holy Ghost, it is followed by, "Because they said he hath an unclean spirit." This sin then consists in attributing the works of mercy of our Lord to the devil. This sin cannot be committed by us in just the same way in which it was committed by the Pharisees; nor is it probable that there are any persons now who believe that our Saviour wrought those miracles, and that he wrought them by the help of Beelzebub. What then is the spiritual meaning of the sin against the Holy Ghost; or in what sense is the denunciation of this sin universal

and perpetual, covering with its awful possibility all races of men and all time?

We must remember that the whole effort, and the whole work of our Lord, is to make men good; to substitute, in the measure in which they can receive it, His own goodness for their natural proclivity to evil; to perform in them spiritually the miracles of cure and of raising from the dead, which He performed naturally while on earth. The Holy Ghost is the divine operation which effects this work; and the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost consists in considering this work a devilish work. The unpardonable sin is not some act done by a man, which brings upon him inevitable damnation. It consists in the formation of a character which regards all genuine good as hateful and devilish, and all that infinite goodness has done and is ever in the effort to do, as from hell. It denies Him utterly, and holds that astute and sagacious self-love is sufficient to direct life in the best possible way, and attributes all good conduct and true thought to this self-love which is the prince of all the devils. It says, "Evil, be thou my good!" words which the great poet Milton puts into the mouth of Satan, as well he might, for they express the very essence of wickedness and damnation. To every man, *that* is good which he loves, and *that* is evil which he hates. Every man in whom the love

of evil has become absolute by indulgence and confirmation hates good supremely. He has committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, or against the divine action of infinite mercy; he is guilty of profanation of the deepest and most incurable kind; he has utterly rejected the mercy which has yearned to save him from himself. Let him bear this character with him into the other life, and what place can be found for him in heaven? If evil be his good, hell must be to him his heaven,—all the heaven he is capable even of desiring.

Swedenborg often speaks of profanation, describing it generally as a very deep sin, and sometimes as the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. It is of many kinds and many degrees, from the lightest to the greatest. In his work on "Divine Providence," sects. 229 to 233, he speaks of profanation in much detail. He says, "In a most general sense, by profanation is meant all impiety." Afterwards, "Profanation is of several kinds, some lighter, and some more grievous; but they may be referred to these seven kinds." Of these, the sixth kind "is committed by those who acknowledge the Word and still deny the divinity of the Lord." And then he says that these "blaspheme the Holy Ghost."

What he means may best be discovered by putting together the statements he makes in different places. We shall reach the same result by looking

at what our Lord Himself says about Unitarianism, in words to which Swedenborg often refers. In Matthew xxi., Mark xii., and Luke xx., we may read the parable of the husbandman who, when the time came to gather the fruits of his vineyard, sent to the husbandmen his servants, and then other servants, and last of all his son, "saying they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance." This parable is usually regarded as descriptive of the Jews; but the words assigning the cause and reason for their killing the son, — "let us seize on the inheritance," or in another Gospel, "and the inheritance will be ours," — prove conclusively that the meaning of the parable extended beyond the Jews; for no thought of seizing on the inheritance of one "who had not where to lay his head" could have entered into their minds. What, then, is this meaning? We must remember that the whole work and the whole effort of Divine Providence may be regarded as having one purpose, and that is to fill our minds with the conviction that all goodness and wisdom are His, and from Him; and if they are in us at all, are ours by His gift. All these providences are always perfectly adjusted, on the largest and the smallest scale, to the needs and capacities of men.

From the beginning of their existence on earth, He has been leading them, just as far as they were willing to be led, and could be made capable of being led, in their own reason and their own freedom, to a knowledge of Him and a belief in Him. Many were the means and agencies used for this purpose, and all were rejected and abused by those who were not willing to profit by them. All were consummated when He Himself came upon earth and lived among men in a human form and nature. While on earth His words and works, as recorded in the Gospels, attested His divinity in such wise that they who wished to believe it, then and now, might believe it; and also so that they who wished to disbelieve it, then and now, might disbelieve it; for this, like all the acts of mercy which it crowned, was submitted to human freedom.

In all ages it has been by many persons in part rejected and in part received. They saw in His works and words evidence, some more and some less, of divinity. They called Him a man; but He was to them more than a man and all the God they had, for an impersonal God cannot be an object of faith or of love. And all who look upon Him with any measure of living faith are, here or hereafter, lifted into a condition in which they see Him more clearly.

But some in all days, many in some days, have

rejected His divinity utterly. They have slain Him, that the inheritance may be theirs; they reject and deny Him because they love to believe that they are good and wise from themselves and in their own strength. Because they love to believe this, they hate every truth which casts a doubt upon their own self-sufficiency; they will have no divine Saviour to "save them from their sins," because they are perfectly competent to save themselves. They assert the goodness and wisdom of the Lord, and profane this truth so far as to see in His wisdom and goodness, while they believe Him just such a man as they are, proof of their own capacity for an equal goodness and wisdom. Is Swedenborg wrong when he regards this as a profanation, — an awful profanation?

Unpardonable sin! Is there, can there be, any sin which Almighty love cannot pardon? The answer to this question must depend upon what we mean by "pardon." The Lord cannot look upon His creatures with hatred, because He hates their sins for the very reason that it is their sins which make them miserable. He cannot feel any desire to inflict pain upon them, or to do them harm. His pardon consists in helping us to put away our sinfulness. His pardon it is His very life to give. He is far more willing to give it than we are to receive it. If a man destroys his capacity of receiving this

pardon, he commits an unpardonable sin. Then, and then only, he commits the sin against the Holy Ghost, by making the saving operation of the Holy Ghost within his soul impossible.

Let us apply this principle to the profanation which consists in denying that our Lord is God. There are many ways in which this is done; but one law applies to them all, and to every kind of profanation; it is, that profanation of truth cannot be committed by those who know not the truth, or who were prevented by circumstances or influences from understanding it. This sin can be committed in its most fearful forms only by those who have known, acknowledged, and interiorly received the truth, and who afterwards yield to the love of the evil which the truth forbids, and renounce the truth. This alone constitutes profanation in that sense of the word in which the denunciations against the unpardonable sin attach to profanation.

The divinity of our Lord may be denied even when it is asserted; and it may be believed even when it is denied. To believe the divinity of our Lord, is to believe that He is God. There is one God, and only one. To believe that our Lord is one of three Gods, is not to believe that He is God. And yet the belief in a divine Trinity of persons, each of whom is God, is nearly universal in Christendom. Is it then true that unbelief in the divinity

of our Lord is nearly universal? Certainly not. Swedenborg makes a distinction here which is perfectly clear. He says, emphatically, that great numbers of those who are taught the doctrine of a Trinity of persons and of faith alone, and who perhaps hardly know that there is another doctrine, use these words, but interiorly their thoughts are directed to our Lord. He is in effect and substance their God, and it is Him whom they worship and obey.

But the doctrine of a Trinity of persons is made to support the doctrine of faith alone. Some who are its most strenuous defenders and expounders value it for the support it gives to the doctrine of faith alone. And this doctrine they value because it rests salvation on belief, and in some minds even on profession, without demanding that entire renunciation of selfishness and sinfulness in life which they love their sins too well to attempt or desire. They must cling to the idea that there are three Gods, one of whom has purchased for them this right to believe themselves safe if they have faith that He saves them, whatever may be or have been their lives. It is obvious that such a belief as this is not only consonant with an evil life, but, as the horrors of Antinomianism proved in the sixteenth century, so perverts a belief in a Saviour, as to make it encourage an indulgence in all evil. Is not this a denial of His divinity, and is it not a profanation?

So too with Unitarians. We have said that there are those who, while words of denial are on their lips, perhaps because they see no way but to deny Him or to accept a Trinity of Gods and faith alone, yet look to Him, if with a dim, unspoken faith, yet with a loving faith, that would be glad to see Him more clearly; and here or hereafter will have that gladness. This denial is not profanation; but theirs is who reject Him that they may "seize on the inheritance." They, instead of "reverencing the Son," indulge and confirm their self-worship, on the one hand by making use of His divine perfection to justify their self-worship, or on the other by a familiarity which is almost contempt, and is certainly irreverence.

When our selfishness and sinfulness are taken away from us, then they are pardoned. Most true it is that every sin wilfully and deliberately committed forms a part of our selfhood, and that which once forms a part of our selfhood is never extirpated. But "far as the east is from the west He removeth our iniquities from us," if the waters of repentance have washed them as from the centre to the circumference of our being. There they remain inert and inactive; and they and the latent proclivities to sin which we have not known, may be called up to the consciousness of the angel, if he needs to be taught or to be reminded that it is only

the divine mercy which could hold him in safety from himself.

The mercy of the Lord is infinite and inexhaustible. But as we have often said, it can work in man and for man, to effect a radical change of character, only so far as man consents and co-operates. Upon all men, the best and the worst, the same divine mercy makes the spiritual sun to shine and the spiritual rain to fall. It does whatever can be done within the limitations of the law of human freedom ; but this law the divine mercy, because it is perfect, ever preserves and regards.

If this mercy cannot lift a man out of evil into good, it will lift him from a greater evil to a less, if that be possible. If it cannot raise him above the line which separates evil from good, it will raise him as near to that line as the man can be made willing to be raised ; or, if it can do no more, will prevent him from sinking into a deeper evil. A large proportion of the temptations which are permitted to assail men, as well as of the calamities which befall them, do for them only this lower and lesser good. But it may be hoped that none ever befall him, which do not in some way and on the whole work for him some good. For it cannot be known too well or remembered too distinctly, that, were it not for the assistance which the divine mercy is ever rendering us, no imagination could measure the abyss of evil into which we should fall.

FALSE WITNESS.

WE are commanded not to bear false witness. Few persons have an opportunity to disobey this commandment in its most literal sense, for but few are ever called to give testimony in court. But this commandment, like all the others, is a universal law, given to govern the lives of all men continually. It must therefore have a wider sense. An obvious extension of the prohibition applies it to all our words spoken of another. We must bear no false witness against our neighbor in any thing we may say of him. We must not scandalize him in any way. If we either originate or give currency to any depreciatory words concerning any person which are not entirely true, we bear false witness against our neighbor.

But is there not a still wider and deeper meaning to this commandment? Is it not given to guard us against a more internal evil, to which we are all prone, and which most, perhaps all, practise?—an evil which may never come to the surface, and yet

do great injustice to others, and woful harm to ourselves. Are we not commanded not to bear false witness against our neighbor, *in our own hearts?*

If we are too willing to think ill of our neighbor ; if we catch readily at what bad things we hear of him, more readily than at the good which is said ; if we form our judgments of him more from the evil we hear or can detect than from the good we might hear if we offered it an equal welcome, or that which we might see if we sought for it with as strong a wish to find it,—are we not bearing false witness against him within ourselves? The command in the Old Testament is, “Thou shalt not bear false witness;” the command in the New Testament is, “Judge not.” These are one ; that in the Old Testament being the external of the internal commandment in the New. Taken together, they command us neither to say nor to think any thing about our neighbor but the truth. If in the society in which we move and are at home, more evil is said than good, and is said more easily ; and if it is common in conversation to talk slightly about our neighbors, and help the hours to pass away by gossip about their failings and weaknesses, and the things we can laugh at,—then is society in danger of false witness ; and we ourselves, just so far as we utter such worse than idle

words, or find pleasure in them, are within that danger. Slandorous gossip usually springs from contempt, and always feeds and strengthens that evil; and of this I content myself with quoting from George Macdonald: "Hatred is murder in the will; contempt is murder in the intellect." Perhaps there is no habit more common than that of hearing more readily, and speaking more easily, hard words about our neighbors than kind words. How easy it is for some persons to find fault, and how difficult for them to utter words of commendation! If one who has indulged and confirmed this propensity would but observe himself, he would find himself freely and frequently commenting upon the faults in his neighbors and in their work or conduct, and very seldom and very briefly bringing to notice their good things. If asked, "Is there not this or that good,—is there not *some* good in him or his work?" perhaps he answers, "Oh, yes, there is good there; but"—and then he gives some reason why he did not think it well to say any thing about that. Of all this Swedenborg speaks so fully, so wisely, and so well, that I prefer to use his words rather than my own.

Let me first quote from A. E., 1020, the conclusion of what he says concerning this precept:—

"When a man abstains from false testimonies, understood in a moral and spiritual sense, and shuns and is averse from them

as sins, then from the Lord, through heaven, flows in the love of truth and the love of justice. And when man thence loves truth and justice, he loves the Lord, for the Lord is truth itself, and justice itself; and when a man loves truth and justice, then it may be said truth and justice love him, because the Lord loves him: hence his discourses become discourses of truth, and his works become works of justice."

We next quote from the "Arcana," n. 1079, 1080, 1088. In these passages, Swedenborg explains and comments upon the conduct of the sons of Noah when their father "drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent." Ham saw him, and reported his condition to his brethren; and they, going to their father with eyes averted, covered him with a garment. For this, Noah cursed Ham (under the name of Canaan) and blessed Shem and Japheth. This might seem a fearful punishment and a great reward for so small a matter; but it will no longer seem so when we know what these facts signified:—

"In this passage, Ham is the symbol of those who are in faith separate from charity, as is indicated by his observing the nakedness or the errors and perversities of his father; for such persons see nothing else in man. It is, however, otherwise with those whose faith originates in charity; for they observe what is good, and if they see any thing evil and false, excuse, and, so far as they are able, endeavor to amend it, as is here related of Shem and Japheth. Where there is no charity there is self-love, consequently hatred towards all who do not favor themselves; and hence such persons see nothing in their neighbor but his evils, and if they observe any good they either

regard it as nothing, or interpret it as evil. It is, however, altogether otherwise with those who are in charity. By this are these two kinds of persons distinguished, more especially in the other world; for there, such as are not in charity manifest their disposition to hatred in all they think or do: they wish to examine every one, yea, to judge every one, and desire nothing more earnestly than to discover what is evil, continually purposing in their minds to condemn, to punish, and to torment. Those, however, who are in charity scarcely see another's evils, but observe all that is good and true in him; and what they see of evil and false they interpret favorably. Such are all the angels; and this disposition they derive from the Lord, who turns all evil into good." — A. C. 1079.

"By his telling his brethren is meant that he gave way to a spirit of derision. Those who are destitute of charity regard others with continual contempt and derision, and embrace every opportunity of publishing their errors." — A. C. 1080.

"And their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness." In reference to this statement, it may be observed that those who are not in charity think only evil of their neighbor, and do not speak any thing but evil; or if they say what is good, do it with a view to insinuate themselves into the favor of him whom they flatter with commendation. Those, however, who are in charity think and speak only what is good of their neighbor; and this not to gain the favor of others, but from the Lord operating in charity. The former resemble the evil spirits, and the latter the angels who are attendant upon man; for evil spirits always excite man's evils and falses, and condemn him, whereas angels excite nothing but goods and truths, excusing what is evil and false. Hence it is evident that such as are not in charity are under the dominion of evil spirits, by whom man has communication with hell; and that such as are in charity are governed by angels, by whom man has communication with heaven." — A. C. 1088.

I cannot but think that if we would examine ourselves we should find that we are all of us, some

more and some less, addicted to this sin. Let us ask ourselves the simple question, Do we find it easier to think and to say bad things of our neighbor than to think and say good things, and which do we think and say oftener? Surely, a little consideration would convince us that we can never indulge this evil and dangerous habit without strengthening the enemies of our souls, and making the work of the angels who would help us — which is always hard enough — still harder.

It is not meant that we should be insensible to evil, or refrain from calling it by its true name. This would not be well for our neighbors, or for ourselves. But we should first be sure that we see and acknowledge all the good in our neighbor, as that which we love best to see; and from that standpoint we may look upon the evil that is in him, at once kindly and justly; for that is what the angels do. But if we look first at his evils because they give us most pleasure, and acknowledge his good only when we must, then we act as devils act.

NOTE. — This paper was printed in the "New Jerusalem Magazine."

DISCOURSES OF OUR LORD.

I.

OUR Lord wrought many miracles, and in connection with most of these works of mercy He uttered words of wisdom. He was continually teaching by parables; that is, by narratives of external facts which suggested spiritual analogies, which were for the most part obvious and taught the highest, even infinite, spiritual truth by the correspondence between the external and the internal worlds.

But, besides these, He not unfrequently addressed to His disciples, to a few hearers or to multitudes, discourses of greater or less length. In these He gave direct spiritual instruction. This was, in a few instances, concealed beneath the guise of natural language so far that it failed altogether to reach the understanding of His hearers; and some of these passages have ever since been the subject of comment and controversy. In nearly all, however, instruction was given which was and is comprehensible by all. And again, in some of them the

spiritual truth, even while clothed in the simplest natural language, rises in the plain and literal sense of this language to the loftiest height, and gives to men the wisdom of angels.

These discourses differ in these and still other ways; and the differences grow sometimes into apparent inconsistencies. The abilities of strong men have been employed and exhausted, in most ages of the Church, in the effort to explain and reconcile them. Now the means of doing this are amply supplied, because the key which unlocks the inner meaning of these words of infinite wisdom has been given into our hands.

It is not meant by this, that the New Church or any member of it has the power of penetrating to the inmost depths of this truth, for that would be to comprehend the infinite. But we can begin a work which will never end; only begin, with feeble hands, which often we fold with a sense of weakness and inadequacy that obstructs our efforts if it does not paralyze them. They who have labored longest in this way see most clearly how very long a period must elapse, before those who receive these truths shall be enabled by them to discern distinctly that the inner meaning of the written Word is indeed a garment of the Divine Word, woven from top to bottom, through all its degrees of wisdom, without seam or break.

But it is equally true that the progress we may now make, while as nothing in comparison with the infinite extent of this upward path, is yet of unspeakable value; and then most of all, when we seek this truth that it may help us to become better than we are. How seldom do we remember, how imperfectly do we comprehend, the great principle which governs in this matter! Our Father seeks to give to all His children happiness,—the happiness of heaven. He can give this only to them who permit Him to form in them a heavenly character. For this purpose, His Word is His great instrument.

It is so written as to yield for ever and for ever, to all who permit Him to lead them upwards, appropriate guidance and strength for every step of the unending way, the lowest and the highest. But this can be given only to those who seek it. In simple words which express a most momentous truth, if we study the Word with the new means of understanding it now given us, to the end that it may help us to obey Him better, and trust in Him more and love Him more, and escape from worldliness and selfishness,—then, *and only then*, will it be well for us to see the truth, and therefore only then will the mercy of our Father permit Him to enable us to see it.

The first of these discourses, the longest and most continuous, is

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

He had already preached the gospel, the "glad tidings," and wrought many miracles of healing, "and His fame went throughout all Syria;" "and there followed Him great multitudes" from all parts of the Holy Land. He had "gone about all Galilee," teaching in their synagogues, and doing His works of mercy among the people, down on the lower planes of common life. But now "He went up into a mountain." He comes down to us, to all, wherever they are, in whatever depths of sin and worldliness, to do to all the good He can do; but from these lower planes He must go up and lead us up to higher states, if we are to receive spiritual instruction. And there "His disciples came unto Him." This does not mean only the twelve, of whom only four had as yet been chosen; for at the close of this discourse it is said that, when He had ended these sayings, "the people were astonished at His doctrine." It meant all of the multitude who had followed Him, who were willing to go up with Him upon the mountain and there learn from Him. To them He then spoke, and to all such persons He speaks now.

THE BEATITUDES.

The Sermon on the Mount begins with the nine benedictions. In them are stated the conditions of life and character which make it possible for the Lord to give to men the happiness He would give to all; and in connection with those conditions are stated the form or mode of happiness which is given to each condition. The first of them is, —

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. — Matt. v. 3.

Well may it be first, for it is the foundation of all the rest. The Gospels are full of passages distinguishing the rich from the poor, greatly to the advantage of the poor. These passages have been understood in their literal sense; and, so understood, have been useful: they have rebuked worldliness in one of its worst forms, and have helped many to avoid or escape from the degraded wretchedness of avarice. But in their spiritual sense they have taught far more important truth. Wherever the poor are spoken of in Scripture, by them are meant, in the spiritual sense, the spiritually poor, or the “poor in spirit.” And who are they?

The “poor in spirit” know and feel their utter poverty, their perfect dependence upon the Lord, their nothingness without Him, their absolute non-existence did He not at every instant breathe into

them the breath of life. They know that if there be any truth in their understanding, or any good in their affections or their lives, these things did not originate in themselves, but are the gifts of His infinite and constant mercy.

The blessing promised to them is, that the kingdom of heaven is theirs. This is so, because this poverty of spirit is the law of that kingdom. All who are there know that their King, their Lord, is also their Father, and not in an unreal and imaginary way. They know that He caused them to exist, and continually creates them, by giving to them of His own love to become all they have of affection, and of His own wisdom to become all they have of thought, and of His own strength to be whatever power they possess. Their consciousness of good affections, or of wise thoughts, or of active usefulness, has no tendency to excite in them self-love or self-admiration. It causes in their minds an ever-wakeful certainty of the goodness and the presence of God, and in their hearts a gratitude which is the sure foundation of all the happiness, the blessedness, of heaven. Blessed, indeed, are they on earth in whom this poverty of spirit has begun to live; for if they bear it with them into the other world alive, although feeble, there it will grow into the fulness of its stature. And even here it may become as a tree planted by living waters. In vain do the

storms of this life assail it. They may rage among its branches and bend them down, but they cannot break them, nor prevent their gathering strength even from the assailing tempest. Blessed, indeed, are they with all that they can bear of the blessedness of heaven, for they trust in One who cannot fail them, — in Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps; and the vicissitudes, the anxieties, the darkness, and the perils which wait on all are harmless to them, for in quietness and confidence they possess their strength.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. —
Matt. v. 4.

And yet it is certain that all who mourn are not comforted; some drink the cup of despair to its dregs. It is true that most sorrows are so far healed by time that they are forgotten; and, in this land of hills and valleys in which we now sojourn, pain and pleasure chase each other along. But we cannot understand such mere fading away of sorrow as fulfilling the promise of comfort. What then does this promise mean? Again, we can easily answer this question if we remember that the promise is a spiritual promise, made to them who spiritually mourn, or who mourn for spiritual calamities; for fears and doubts and darkness; for error, weakness, and sin. They who mourn for

these things, who regret them, not for their external consequences but for their souls' sake, are sure to be comforted; not always in this world, but always in that other world, where the desire to see the truth opens the eyes to it, and where the repenting sinner finds forgiveness, and has the help of all in heaven to guard him from sinning again.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.—
Matt. v. 5.

Some of the ancient manuscripts of the Gospels transpose the fourth and fifth verses, bringing the fifth next the third, so that the promise of earth to the meek follows immediately after the promise of heaven to the poor in spirit. However this may be, it is obvious that in their meaning these two benedictions are thus connected. One of them refers to the internal of man, and the other to his external. To the poor in spirit the influence and the happiness of heaven comes, because their self-renunciation suppresses that love of self, trust in self, and pride in self, which close and bar the doors of heaven. To the meek belongs the earth, or all external peace and happiness. The word translated *meek*, means mild, gentle, easy to be entreated. This excellence stands to poorness of spirit in the relation which the love to the neighbor holds to the love to God :

it is not the same, but "like unto it." To the one, the highest happiness we can receive is promised; and to the other, all happiness which is below the highest.

Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. — Matt. v. 6.

The Lord desires to gratify all our wishes; and therefore He desires that they should be such that He can gratify them. Because His love is perfect, He can gratify our wishes only when that gratification will promote and not hinder our happiness; that is, when it shall promote and not hinder the formation of such a character as shall be consistent with true and permanent happiness. And because His wisdom is perfect, He cannot fail to distinguish perfectly between those of our wishes which lead toward that happiness, and those which lead away from it. In other words, in all His providential dealings with us, He looks to eternal results. We are all of us constantly forming wishes, and constantly endeavoring to carry them into effect. One thing only is certain. When we meet with disappointments and failure (and every life is full of them), it is certain, — and but for the veil cast over us by worldliness and selfishness, we should see it as certain, — that, whenever we fail to accomplish any wish or purpose, it is because that wish was

inconsistent with our eternal interests, and that failure was the best thing the Lord could do to promote these interests.

When we hunger and thirst after righteousness, then and then only we have a strong desire, the gratification of which cannot but be well for us ; and therefore it must come. This is as inevitable as infinite power can make it. We may be worn and wearied with the sorrows and conflicts of life, and saddened by a consciousness of what we have done and what we have been and what we are, until we long for happiness and rest. This state has been brought upon us by divine mercy, though we have reached it by a hard and painful path. It is good, and may lead us to a better state. It may be, in itself, little more than a wearying discontent with what we have and what we are. But through it we may be led to a genuine and heartfelt hunger and thirst for righteousness ; and then we are very near the gates of heaven.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. —
Matt. v. 7.

The teaching of this text is that the Lord deals with us even as we deal with our brethren. He cannot do otherwise. His love, His mercy, His forgiveness, are perfect, and are universal. He cannot hate ; and if His mercy were withdrawn.

from any one for a moment, the result would be not suffering, but extinction. How, then, is it that He is merciful only to those who are merciful?

The house that closes its doors and windows against the light, is dark in the brightest noon. The heart which closes itself against the divine mercy and the divine truth, is cold and dark in the midst of the heat and light which surround it and are ever pressing for entrance; for the keys of every man's heart are delivered to himself, and, if he chooses not to open it, it remains closed for ever.

The man who is merciful is so, not from any mercy originating in himself, but because he has received of the Lord's infinite mercy into his heart, and has permitted it to become his mercy. Not that the Lord is merciful *through* him, for this is true of all that live, because the Lord is able to make some use of every man, be he evil or good. But the man is merciful *from* the Lord: he is merciful with the mercy which is given to him of the divine mercy to be his.

The divine mercy not only bears a different aspect, but is a different thing, to the merciful and to the unmerciful. To the merciful it shows itself as tender and loving and helpful for all good purposes, and is recognized as mercy. To the unmerciful it is equally kind; but to him the kindest thing it

can do is to restrain him from harming his brethren, and to do this by fears and fetters and punishment when they are necessary to that end. To that man this mercy cannot seem otherwise than unkindness and severity. It may even be needful that the violent and ferocious man should be controlled by violence and extreme severity; and to him that God who is only love must seem to be a God of terror and of vengeance, so wofully distorted is the eye of his spirit. This is an extreme case. But we may always be sure that, whenever and in whatever degree the Lord seems to us hard and unmerciful, it is because then and in that degree we are hard; and we see Him, not as He is, but as we cause Him to appear.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.—
Matt. v. 8.

He is all around us, everywhere, all in all. Why do we not see Him everywhere; not in person, but in His love, His wisdom, His works? Why do we not discern Him, not only in His universe and its preservation and government, but in all the events of our own life? It is because we are not pure in heart; because our selfishness and worldliness, and the lusts which sometimes break out into sin, interpose a thick cloud between us and Him. This cloud he is perpetually working to remove. But

He cannot remove it any faster than we can be made willing to give up our selfish and wrongful affections and habits. So fast and so far as we do resist them and learn to hate them, we become pure in heart. And in that measure does the cloud disappear which darkens for us His providence. Then, whatever befalls us, we shall be sure if it gives pleasure that it is His gift of enjoyment; or if it be painful, we shall be as sure that it comes by his permission, to lessen our resistance to the influence of His angels, and to enlarge our capacity of happiness. This is the path to heaven; and if we go there we shall become as the angels are, so pure in heart that we shall see Him wherever He is, and that is always and everywhere. And who can conceive of the blessedness and peace this constant perception of His presence will give?

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. — Matt. v. 9.

Our first and lowest idea of peace is that of rest from external conflict and pain; and even this peace may give a deep sense of enjoyment, when the conflict has been fierce and the pain severe. We rise somewhat, when we think of peace as repose after spiritual conflict and pain. But as yet our idea of peace is only negative; it is only the cessation and absence of suffering. But these ideas of peace are

the lower steps of the ladder by which we may be prepared for, and arise to, a higher and truer idea of peace. Then we shall see that peace is the best and inmost happiness. We shall know why the apostle wrote of the "peace of God which passeth understanding." Only angels, and men who are becoming angels, can have this peace, and only they can know what it is. We may, however, lift up our thoughts so far as to see that, where all conflict and disturbance within or without have ceased for ever, and with these all obstruction to the inflowing into our hearts of all of the divine happiness which they can contain, and an unclouded certainty that we are infolded in the arms of omnipotent mercy is ever with us, there must be a peace which it is almost oppressive to think of, so far is it above us now.

And yet it is the constant effort of our Father to give us even this peace: only the lowest form of it and in small measure and with wearying intervals, if that is all which our condition of mind and character make it best for us to have; but more and more, and better and better, even to the highest, when we permit Him so to cleanse our hearts as to make that possible.

Well, then, may they be called the children of God, whose aim is the same as His, whose constant effort it is "to guide our feet into the way of peace."

II.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. — Matt. v. 9-12.

These three verses declare and describe the blessing which awaits persecution and suffering endured for the sake of righteousness, or for His sake. They are true in their literal sense. Distress of this kind is sure to be accompanied or followed by an internal peace, which is abundant compensation; and then heaven is promised as a reward. In all ages of the Church this literal sense has had much power, and in its early ages very great power. Men were not only strengthened by it to bear all that the fiercest hostility could inflict, but in many instances they welcomed persecution and went forth to meet it, and, carrying this feeling to excess, even sought for martyrdom. We have nothing like this now. But while these verses are as true as ever in their literal sense, we are now permitted to know their spiritual meaning. In that sense they relate to spiritual trials and temptations.

This word, *temptation*, is used in Scripture, and sometimes in common writing or speech, in two

ways. Most frequently it means only those enticements to wrong-doing which all men know, and to which all sometimes yield. But at other times it means a far deeper conflict between good and evil in our souls. And Swedenborg generally uses the word in this deeper sense.

When we have learned a truth and seen it with clearness and gladness, and then a time comes when it is dimmed, and we have almost lost it, and are weighed down by the oppressive thought that it was but a fantasy or folly, we fight against this oppression. This is a temptation.

We have resisted and overcome some lust, some love of what is wrong, and rejoice in the belief that we have cast the poison wholly away. But it comes again, and lifts its head like a serpent from the dust; and we feel that it is seeking to poison our hearts again, and we fight earnestly with this enemy of our souls. This is a temptation.

Our feet have slipped, and we have sinned, it may be a grievous sin. But we have repented, or have striven to repent, and in bitter sorrow have cast ourselves down before our Father and prayed to Him to cleanse and strengthen us. And we have been comforted, and permitted to believe that we have escaped from that lust and its destruction. And then there come again hours of sadness, when we cannot escape from the self-accusation that we

still love that sin, that its venom had permeated our whole nature, that forgiveness of so much wickedness is impossible. Even despair may be impending over us; but still we struggle and pray for help that we may not be utterly overcome. This is a temptation.

Deeper even than these forms of temptation, there may be a conflict going on between our own tendencies to sin as they rise into consciousness, or even before that, and the cleansing influences which would deliver the soul from these deeply buried germs of spiritual disease and death; and we may know little more of it than the distress and darkness which this conflict causes. And this, too, is a temptation.

There are few topics which Swedenborg treats more fully or more frequently than this. He tells us that temptations are always conflicts between angels and infernal spirits for the mastery of our souls. Nor can we take a step forward in the warfare of life, without contending with the evil that is in us, or without a temptation, nor without conquering in that temptation.

If we did not know our evils, we could not put them away; we could not know them, if infernal spirits were not permitted to waken them into consciousness and life: and all regeneration and all the hope it brings of heaven are ours on the condition

that, with the strength given us to that end, we fight against these adversaries. God and His angels fight on our side. If we conquer, it is in the strength He gives us; but we must use that strength in the combat, or He cannot give us the victory.

The word *devil*, from a Greek root, means “an accuser.” And with what an exhaustless armory of accusation do we supply him, by our follies and weaknesses and sins! and with what skill and craft he uses all his weapons! But they who are on our side are stronger than he, if we will but permit them to help us to avoid sin, or, if we have fallen, to repent of our sin, thoroughly, earnestly, and with the whole heart.

On our way upward, every step we take must be planted on a conquered temptation; and well may we rejoice, if each one that comes ends in our victory. So will the kingdom of heaven be ours. So fared the prophets who were before us, for prophets here represent all who have received more than a common outpouring of the Holy Spirit,—the spirit of truth and love. Such men have suffered, who can say how much? But they have learned to rejoice in the means which led them to Himself; and the path they trod is open to all who are willing to be led by the same guidance, on the same way and to the same end.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid; neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house.—Matt. v. 14, 15.

In these verses the missionary work of the true Christian is described. The disciples are told that they are “the light of the world.” Truth is the light of the spirit. The disciples are those who have received the truth. They are reminded that men do not kindle a natural light and hide it under a measure, and are led to infer that if spiritual light be kindled in them they must not hide it, but place it where it may shine and give light to all that are within the house. They must implant it in conduct and character, and it will then give light to all that are in the house with them; to all, that is, who are so like them, or so near them in spiritual nearness, as to be spiritually of the same household with them.

Then follows a more special direction. If as disciples of our Lord we have received His instruction, we must wish to give freely what we have freely received. And we are commanded to do this. But how?

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.—Matt. v. 16.

It is not enough that we let our light shine, for this we may do from mere vanity or self-seeking. But we must let it *so* shine, that the regard of men

may be drawn, not to ourselves personally, but to our good works; and so drawn to them, that men shall not think only of our excellence and feed our ambition and love of praise, but shall see that we in our good works are servants of our Lord, and shall give to Him the glory.

What a lesson is there here for every sincere Christian, and especially for them who believe that they have been permitted to see truth not seen by those around them! It is a most solemn duty to impart this to others. If we recognize this duty, and use external means of discharging it, this is well. But the far more important and far more useful and effectual way of imparting this truth, is by exhibiting it in our characters and lives. This is a work we all can do. Husbands and wives, parents and children, every man in every occupation of life, every woman in every household, can do this; and, just so far as they actually possess the truths of the Church, will do this and must do this. Let them turn this lesson to account in learning from it whether they are actually of that Church to which they belong in name. For if they are not other and better men and women than they would have been without it, if they do not discharge the duties of life the better for the light which the truths of that Church cast upon all duty, they do not belong to that Church in fact, whatever they may profess or suppose.

But they may feel that their position is retired and withdrawn from notice, and think they cannot be examples for others. A moment's reflection will assure them that there neither is nor can be a human being whose example is not influencing, for good or for evil, other human beings, and through these still others.

They may be humble, and think they must, perhaps even wish they may, pass through life unnoticed. But to them, as to all, our Lord gives instruction. After telling the disciples they are the light of the world, he adds, "A city which is set on a hill cannot be hid." A city is a collection of dwellings in which men reside who are brought together by some community of purpose or interest. A city corresponds to, and in the Scriptures it represents, those general doctrines in which men agree, and which bring them spiritually near together, because of their community of belief and of life according to their belief. This is its meaning everywhere in the Word. Thus, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, represents and signifies the system of doctrines which constitute the faith of the New Church.

As in a city each inhabitant has his own house or dwelling, so in that which a city corresponds to and represents, each one has his own peculiar and personal view of these doctrines or truths. It is im-

possible for any two persons to see them precisely alike. But all are near together, and are gathered together by the essential and fundamental principles which are common to them all.

Mountains or hills, elevations of earth, represent and signify elevations of the spirit, of the affections, and the life. And when the doctrines which are believed rest firmly upon affections, character, and conduct lifted up above the common level of natural life, they must be seen, for they cannot be hidden.

When we remember that the early Christians so lived that the world around them exclaimed, "See how these Christians love one another!" we shall wonder less at the rapid spread of their doctrines.

When any New-Church man or woman so lives that others ask what has made them such as they are, and learn that it is the faith they hold, he or she becomes the best and most effectual missionary of the Church.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. — Matt. v. 17.

These verses relate to the law of God and its obligation. In the literal sense, "the law and the prophets" mean the written Word, the Old Testament. But spiritually they mean every truth of the divine wisdom revealed to men to regulate their conduct and guide them to heaven.

All this truth is contained in and expressed by the written Word. Only a small part of it is expressed by the letter of the Word, or can be learned from the letter without the aid of the science of correspondence. But it is all there. Infinite wisdom is there, finited and brought down within reach of men, because the correspondence between spiritual things and natural things makes it possible to express all spiritual truth in natural language and natural facts and figures.

This spiritual truth is but the form of infinite and divine wisdom. It is the law of the divine working in the creation, preservation, and government of the natural and the spiritual universe. It is revealed to men, that by their conformity with this law they may live and work in harmony with the Infinite. Life flows into them from Him, but it is their own choice which determines whether it shall be in them and flow forth from them unperturbed. And divine truth is revealed to them in the written Word, to guide and help them to hold and live this influent life without perversion.

Hence, in its outermost and lowest expression, or in its letter, it is adapted to the needs of men in all the states, the lowest or the highest, in which it can find them. While men in the lowest states are taught by it precisely what they most need to know, men may find, even in the letter, instruc-

tion ready for the reception and use of those who have reached far higher states. And now that the inner senses are in some measure revealed, and means are given by the due use whereof men may enlarge their comprehension of these senses indefinitely, there is no possibility, for the present or the future, of any human state or requirement to which the Word does not offer the very light of heaven.

Our Lord came not to destroy, but to fulfil. And He alone did perfectly fulfil this whole law, from outermost to inmost.

He declares that no jot nor tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled. All was fulfilled in Him and by Him. Much of this law was abrogated in its literal sense by His fulfilment of it. But no jot nor tittle of the inner truth can ever pass from the law until heaven and earth pass away, for the whole of this truth is one with His infinite and eternal wisdom.

For I say unto you, except your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. — Matt. v. 20.

It is always possible to obey the literal commandments of the law without any regard for or compliance with its spirit. This external righteousness was that of the Scribes and Pharisees who tithed mint and cummin, but forgot the weightier matters of the law; who washed clean the outside of the

platter, but left the inside filthy. Our righteousness must be more than that, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. The reason of this is, that our eternal condition in the other world depends upon the character we bear with us thither; and such righteousness has no tendency to improve the character, or prepare us for the happiness of heaven.

III.

Many of the remaining verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew are employed in illustrating the difference between the Old and the New; between that dispensation of truth which was given to the Jews, and that which our Lord gave to all men. It is the difference between the external and the internal, between the natural and the spiritual. Thus it is said : —

Ye have heard that it has been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. — Matt. v. 21, 22.

Then our Lord follows this by a rebuke of anger or ill-will of any kind or measure, and by the most positive requirement of repentance, atonement, and reconciliation.

He next deals with the dreadful crime of adultery.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. — Matt. v. 27, 28.

We are thus told that the thought, and still more the wish, of adultery is sin. And then it follows, if the right eye or the right hand offend, let them perish rather than the whole body. If faculties, passions, and desires, which duly exercised may be productive of great good, pass beyond the limits of rightful indulgence, they have become infernal; they cannot but offend, and it is well that they should be utterly denied and suppressed. Hence asceticism, in some ages of the Christian Church, and it may be with some persons in all ages, was and is good, comparatively good; far better than an indulgence of the lusts which only asceticism can cope with in such persons.

Then oaths are spoken of and are prohibited. "Let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." What can be more obvious than that if there were no evil there would be no falsity; and if no falsity, all confirmations of truth would be unnecessary. There might still be honest mistakes; but oaths are required only to prevent wilful misstatement; and surely that always "cometh of evil."

Then revenge and retaliation are spoken of. "By them of old time" it was required that they should be exactly measured, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but when our Lord spoke personally to men, both were absolutely forbidden. And, in their place, submission to injury, which is their exact opposite, is inculcated.

Similar to that lesson is the next. By them of old time, men were told that while they must love their neighbor they were at liberty to hate their enemy. But the new command is, "Love your enemies." New as this commandment was, far transcending the utmost height attained by any philosophy or religion then in the world, it was carried out in the remaining verses of this chapter into details and particulars which seem to embrace the whole possibility of forgiveness. A reason is then given: it is that thus we may become the children of our Father in heaven, because it is just so that he deals with us. The duty of forgiveness, its meaning, its reason and its effect, will be considered again in reference to the Lord's prayer and the words immediately following it.

In all that I have now said of the verses which are employed in exhibiting the contrast between the Old and the New, I have suggested little if any thing which has not been said, or might not have been said, before any distinctive New-Church doc-

trines were made known to men. It may be asked, then, What light do they cast on this subject, or why were they necessary to the fullest understanding of it? Let me try to answer this question.

The Old Testament was perfectly adapted in its letter to the children of Israel; and therefore is, in its letter, perfectly adapted to the lowest possible human states. For they were chosen for their especial purpose, because they were the most natural or most external of mankind; and words which could reach them and help them to rise into higher conditions would necessarily reach all men with their message of mercy, and lift them out of the abyss and guide them upwards, if they were willing to go up. For although all men are not so entirely natural and external as the Israelites, all men are so in some measure, and many are so in a large measure.

More than this. For those Jews to whom these words were not spoken in vain, and on whom the merciful dispensations of punishment and restraint did not fall in vain, there were also words of far higher import; texts which, even in the letter, unveil the face of our Father in the heavens. And all these words have ever been and ever will be addressed to the Israelitish nature and character in all men, and in all its states from lowest to highest. Naturalness and externalism belong to all of us, and need just these words.

The written Word of God is an expression of His wisdom, which is born of His love, and must be infinite, extending from the inmost of God down to the lowest and last of rational being. But as it comes down even to the lowest ultimates, it finds at every step below the highest those who stand at that step; and it is made to be everywhere, or on every plane of being and character which it passes in its descent, that which it must be there to be most useful; that is, it is made to mean everywhere that which it must mean to yield there, or to men in the state to which it is then addressed, the precise instruction needed. Hence there are many meanings, one within or above the other.

All of them may be considered as arranged into three classes, — the natural, the spiritual, and the heavenly. In the natural sense it is addressed to natural men, and commands obedience; in the spiritual sense it is adapted to men who are moved by higher motives than reward or punishment, for they have an unselfish love for the neighbor and for the truth which teaches them to be good; in the heavenly sense it speaks to those who have risen, through the steps of obedience and a love for the neighbor, to a love for the Lord Himself, and it teaches them to see more and more clearly for ever that all lower loves, and all good and all happiness, are in and from this highest love. If

divine truth in its natural form be not known and obeyed by any one, to him it cannot come in its higher forms. Nor can the individual or the race ascend in any other way than step by step, making each lower step the means of reaching a higher.

To the children of Israel, and to all so far as they have the same purely natural character, "Thou shalt not kill" meant, "Do not murder any man;" and it meant no more. When our Lord stood on earth, He was able to give to those who heard Him then, or have since read His words, a higher or spiritual meaning to those words, and taught that they forbade men to hate, to despise, to hurt, or offend each other. He promised to come again. He has come again, and has given us the higher, the heavenly meaning of those words. They now say to us, "Do not kill the soul; put not any man to spiritual death;" do not teach falsity; do not by your own thought or belief, or by any thing in your life and conversation, obstruct the inflowing of a true life from its divine origin through the heavens; do nothing to pervert this life, and change it from spiritual life into spiritual death. In a similar or analogous way the whole law of the former time was lifted to a higher meaning; and now we are taught that this meaning is infinite, and we may ascend some of the steps of this higher meaning, and begin an upward progress towards heaven

and towards the Lord of heaven, which will never end.

We have tried to exhibit a higher sense than the literal to the command not to kill. Perhaps a better way of finding this is to look at the exact opposite to killing, or the most perfect obedience to the command not to kill. For this we must go to heaven. They who are there have a constant and unclouded perception that man's life is God's life given to him; that in and with this life, so far as it is unperverted, is all happiness; that the very essence of this life is the love of others, and that their own reception of this life and its blessedness are measured by their love of others. What else can be their end and aim, through all the days of eternity, but to help others to receive this divine life; to receive it more and more with ever-growing fulness, and to cleanse it more and more from the perversion and pollution of the selfishness and worldliness which cling to man's inherited nature? It is thus they co-operate with the Lord in His perpetual endeavor to impart His own love and happiness, and it is thus they open their own hearts to receive this happiness. And this heavenly character and heavenly blessedness begin with obedience to the command, "Thou shalt not kill," in its most literal sense, and are founded upon that obedience.

The same thing may be said of the other commandments here referred to, and indeed of all the requirements of God's Word, and all the dealings of His Providence. Their highest significance is understood in the degree in which we discern that the end of all requirement and all Providence is to make it possible for infinite love to impart itself and its own happiness in such measure as may be ; and to teach and induce us to know, suppress, and remove, in ourselves and in others, those proclivities to selfishness and sin and lust which obstruct the reception of this happiness, and make it imperfect or impossible.

Take heed that ye do not your works before men, to be seen of them ; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee. — Matt. vi. 1, 2.

In some of the early manuscripts of the New Testament, the word which means "alms" is replaced by one meaning "righteousness ;" and this reading is preferred by the best critics. Whichever word is used, it is a symbol or representation of all our good works. As love to our Lord is the supreme good, the selfish love of self is the supreme evil ; and worldliness, or the love of the world for the sake of self, is a common and most insidious form of it : where it prevails in the mind, it suffocates all genuine good and obscures all truth. "How can you

believe," says our Lord, "who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor which cometh of God only?" This fearful evil does not prevent our doing good works. It permits its slaves to perform them, and then it changes the character of these works perfectly, leaving to them all the semblance of good and all the reality of evil. With such good works as these, it feeds the infernal fires which it has kindled in the heart. From minds so infected truth is withheld, for they could only pervert it to a base purpose and make it the means of a deeper degradation.

Self-love is exactly opposite to the love which constitutes the highest or heavenly heaven, and worldliness is the exact opposite of the middle or spiritual heaven. Let it not be supposed that the good will or good opinion of our neighbors may not be desired. It is with this as with all other sources of innocent enjoyment, — as health, wealth, and the pleasures of sense. All are in heaven, and are given to us on earth as good gifts. But they are heavenly and good only when and only so far as they are free from selfishness, and are subordinated to the love of the Lord and of the neighbor, and are at once the effects and instruments of those higher loves by which they incite us to and guide us in genuine uses.

1. Fearfully insidious is this evil. Some persons are

more liable to it than others; or, rather, it assails different persons in different ways. But let us look into our own hearts, and find out what it is which we really love best. We can do this; for we can see how much we think of, care for, and love the interests and pleasures of this world, and then how much we love the things which promote our spiritual well-being and our growth in goodness and prepare us for the happiness of another life. Let us see how often, if not always, when we do any good thing, even if we do it in a large measure from a good motive, the thought that we thereby strengthen our influence, or win approbation, acknowledgment, or admiration, makes us glad. If we seek honestly, shall we not find that we seldom do any good thing, but the enemies of our souls, if they cannot prevent our doing a good thing, crawl in and infect it if they may with the poison of their own evil?

IV.

PRAYER.

After this manner, therefore, pray ye. — Matt. vi. 9.

Of prayer how little can be said! Its importance is inexpressible; the reasons for it ascend to the nature of God, and are near the heart of all His relations with man. Wherever there has been

or is religion of any kind, there is prayer. Our Lord himself prayed: sometimes He ascended a mountain, because it answered to the higher and better state in which the soul should be when it communes with God. Often He prayed in the night, sometimes through the hours of darkness, sometimes in agony.

Wherever there is religion there is prayer; and therefore where there is no prayer there is no religion, for any and every religious affection or emotion prompts to prayer of some kind. It may be little more than a throb of gratitude, or a sigh of repentance, or a cry for help in danger and distress; but prayer it must be.

Hence, there is no sign of the times more indicative of the prevalence and the free utterance of unbelief which characterize this age, than the unreserve with which prayer is called in question, and indeed regarded as necessarily irrational. How easy it is to say, and for them who have in their minds no truths but those which sensuous thought discovers or appreciates how easy it is to think, that if our prayers can teach God what we want He must be very ignorant; and if they can make Him more willing to help us than He was before, He must be sadly wanting in kindness. And then a challenge is thrown out to test the efficacy of prayer by an experiment, just as the strength of an electric battery might be tested. This may

be well for those who have no other idea of God than as a universal and unlimited electric battery, or an all-pervading force, or in other words have no idea of Him at all; but to those who know what prayer has been and is for them, who know its guiding, protecting, strengthening, and healing efficacy, and who feel that they could not live without it, such a proposal brings a shuddering horror.

Perhaps they learned at their earthly father's knee that their fervent requests brought from him the gratification of their little wishes; and now they may be parents themselves, and know that if their earthly father was wise and good he could grant to earnest prayer what that very prayer proved that they were able to receive safely, and helped them so to receive it. They know, or they feel if they do not reason about it, that when they pray fervently they open their hearts and make it possible for their Father in heaven to give, for He waits only for their willingness and consequent ability to receive to give them every good.

Our Lord first rebukes all hypocrisy in prayer; and this includes all false and ostentatious piety, which displays itself before men to win their applause.

Then He commands us to use no vain repetitions, or not to pray with the hope or purpose of telling

Him who does not know how to help them, or to persuade an unwilling Father to give them what He would otherwise have withheld.

Then He tells us how to pray ; not to use always just these words and never any other, but always in this manner. He gives us a model prayer, a perfect prayer, which may help us always to pray aright.

Our Father, who art in heaven. — Matt. vi. 9.

This thought, if not these words, must needs be the beginning of all prayer. The recognition of a Father, lifted high above the earth, is not only the foundation thought of prayer, but the first step in the way of goodness. It is the light of the dawning of the first day, when the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters, and begins within us the work of spiritual creation.

Our Father! Can we indeed pray these words from the heart, without some sense of the brotherhood which makes all who live the children of the same Father, to be loved as our brothers and sisters? Can we utter them, and not feel that His fatherly love wraps us around with brooding tenderness?—His fatherly love from which comes our own, and of which all we can feel or imagine is but the smallest part, the faintest shadow.

Hallowed be Thy name. — Matt. vi. 9.

If our recognition of our Father is sincere and earnest, it cannot but be followed by a desire and an effort to worship, to hallow His name. And if acknowledgment characterizes the first day, worship is the next step, and makes the next the second day. The name of any being is that which we know Him by; and the name of God includes all we know of God, — His Word, and whatever we accept as His truth and His instruction, and whatever we discern of His presence and His Providence. It is all this which we must regard as holy, and strive to hold more and more holy.

Thy kingdom come. — Matt. vi. 10.

If we sincerely acknowledge our Father, and endeavor to hold Him and all we know Him by as holy, we shall surely take the next step and desire to obey Him; to let Him rule over us, and be the king of our souls and life. This is a third day. It completes the requirements for belief and conduct. If there be farther progress, it must be in motive and in internal character.

Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. — Matt. vi. 10.

And now a new day comes to us. It comes with the desire and effort not only to obey, but to obey

with the heart, to obey from love; to obey His will even as it is obeyed in heaven. He is king over the unhappy ones who persist in turning away from Him. He rules them *against* their wills; they know it and tremble, and obey from fear and compulsion. They who are in heaven know that He is their king, and they rejoice. He rules them *through* their wills. He has given them of His love; they have accepted it, and obey Him in love and in freedom.

“On earth as it is in heaven.” We have, as all know who have made any spiritual growth, an internal nature and an external nature. They know it, because they have felt that while their internal perceived the truth and prompted to obedience, their external, sensuous, and worldly nature resisted, and perhaps bore them down to sin. Their internal is open to influences from heaven; their external is of the earth, earthly. Happy is he whose earth, or external, has learned to obey the heaven of his internal; whose earth is as his heaven! Blessed is the man, says Swedenborg, who, when he dies and rises in another life, is found to have his external in full correspondence with his internal!

The constant effort of all who are in heaven is to make His will more and more their will; and so they grow in wisdom, goodness, and happiness for ever. And when we pray this prayer with the

heart, our desire and effort are to make His will our will.

Give us this day our daily bread. — Matt. vi. 11.

It is something if we ask, day by day, for the food that sustains our body. But this prayer means much more. The word translated *daily* is a peculiar one, and has been the subject of much discussion among commentators of Scripture. It is however agreed that it includes the idea of fitness, adaptedness, and sufficiency for our subsistence of body and of soul. Such thought we should have when we pray this prayer. We ask our Father for whatever is best for our natural life and our spiritual life. Then a new day has come; and in it we acknowledge our perfect and constant dependence upon our Father, and delight to cast ourselves wholly upon Him, and accept whatever comes from His Providence as the best thing that can come to us.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. — Matt. vi. 12.

Through all spiritual progress, the love of self has been our great opponent, our great hindrance. It is the source of all evil, and when it is effectually subdued and suppressed, its place in the heart is filled with the opposite love, — with love to the Lord and its derivative love, the love of the

neighbor. Then evil has lost its power. The sixth day has come: man lives; and the work of spiritual creation is finished, when we are able to ask of the Infinite to deal with us even as we deal with our neighbor. Most difficult—how difficult they only know who have met this difficulty with earnest effort—is it to pray this prayer sincerely and from the heart! How fervently should we desire, how watchfully and earnestly should we strive for, the ability to forgive, to forgive perfectly, to put far from us all anger, all revenge, and to learn in heart and life that hardest of all lessons,—to love our enemies as ourselves!

Well may we strive for this; for in putting this evil away, we put far from us a chief enemy of our peace, a strong barrier between us and heaven. And if we do this, we are prepared for the next, the closing day.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.—Matt. vi. 13.

Now we pray that the seventh day, the Sabbath of the soul, may come. Hitherto, at every step, we have advanced by conflict and temptation, and victory in temptation. And not otherwise could we have advanced; for all progress or advance in goodness consists in resisting and putting away

hindrances to goodness, or our proclivities to that which is not good. All combats with these are temptations. Only when the work is done can we know unbroken, unclouded peace; for then only can we be delivered from evil without being led into temptation. And why is temptation no longer needed and inevitable? Because now the kingdom is His, and we rejoice in His unresisted sway; and the power is His, and we know that all our strength is His and from Him, and is given to us; and we give to him the glory, all of it, in grateful acknowledgment that it is He who has fought for us and saved us, He who has given us the victory, He who has brought us where we may know the joy of them who do His will.

Through every step the Lord has labored for us and within us, to create us into His image and likeness. Now He rests from His labors and hal- lows this day; and we rest from our labors, and receive from His love a Sabbath of peace.

I close these remarks upon the Lord's prayer, with number 6619 from Swedenborg's "*Arcana Cœlestia*."

"That innumerable things are contained in the ideas of thought, and that those which are contained in order are from things interior, was also evident to me while I was reading the Lord's prayer, morning and evening. The ideas of my

thought were then constantly opened towards heaven, and innumerable things flowed in, so that I observed clearly that the ideas of thought conceived from the contents of the prayer were filled from heaven; and such things were also infused as it is impossible to utter, and also impossible for me to comprehend, only I was sensible of the general affection thence resulting; and what is wonderful, the things which flowed in were every day varied. Hence it was given to know that in the contents of that prayer there is more than the universal heaven is capable of comprehending, and that with man more is in it in proportion as his thought is more opened towards heaven; and, on the other hand, fewer things are in it in proportion as his thought is more closed. For with those who have the thought closed, nothing more appears therein than the sense of the letter, or that sense which is nearest to the expressions."

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. — Matt. vi. 14, 15.

In these verses our Lord enforces the clause in His prayer in which we ask to be forgiven as we forgive. Here He tells us that if we forgive men their trespasses, then only will He forgive us.

The truths now revealed for the New Church

say to us that if we forgive others, the Lord *can* forgive us; and if we do not forgive others, He *cannot* forgive us.

This may seem to limit the power of the Omnipotent; and yet we are told that to Him all things are possible. One answer to this might be that God must be perfectly just, perfectly and always right, and therefore can never do what is not just and right; and thus His infinite perfection limits omnipotence. But far more than this is taught us by the truths now given to us.

What is the divine forgiveness? God can never cease to love any of His children; never lose the desire to give them all good. In the literal sense of the Word He is said to be angry, to hate wrong-doers, and take vengeance upon them. But this is because the literal sense of the Word presents God to the merely natural man as that man cannot but see Him, and that is like himself; for every man looks upon God through himself. Hence, with the merciful He cannot but show Himself merciful; with the upright, upright; with the pure, pure; and with the froward, froward. But the Lord cannot hate, for He is love itself and only love. He can and does punish wrong-doing, but it is only that the punishment may bring the wrong-doer into a condition in which infinite goodness may give him good. This condition depends upon the man

himself, for to every man is given all he is able to receive; and he is able to receive all that, and only that, which he is willing to receive. To every man is given power to bring himself into the state in which good may be given to him. More than this can be given to no man; for such is his nature, such his relation to his Father, such the laws of divine order, that a man is capable of receiving and enjoying only the good which he, in freedom, chooses and desires. No good can come to him from himself, and no spiritual goodness can come to him from the source of all goodness, but that which he asks for and is ready for. Nothing else would either be or seem good to him.

Now let us suppose that a man against whom his brother has trespassed, therefore hates him; a desire of revenge awakes, and he wishes to hurt his enemy in some way. Can we not see that while he indulges such feelings as these, it is impossible that the love of that neighbor who has become his enemy should be given to him? And yet this very love is the thing he most needs, and the greatest good that could be given to him. He must resist his desire for revenge; he must struggle against his hatred. If he makes this effort, the Lord will surely give him all the help which can be given him and leave his freedom unimpaired. But that must be left unimpaired, that he may do his part of the

work ; for it is he, he himself and no other, who, in his freedom and in the strength given him, resists and overcomes this evil. And then when it is overcome, the Lord pours into his heart, from the ever-welling fountain in Himself, love instead of hatred, and rest instead of the wrath which tosses him like a storm. Only when this hate and anger are overcome, can the peace of love be given him ; only when he forgives, can he be forgiven.

This too is a hard lesson, to some persons a very hard one ; for it may be that just through this door do the enemies of his soul find easiest entrance. Be sure that they are ever watchful to keep it open ; to keep our thoughts busy about the injury we have received ; to bring it to our minds when we wake, and through the day find in whatever occurs means to suggest it, even when we had almost forgotten it.

Let us look into our hearts, and if we find this evil thing we shall surely find unrest, disturbance, discomfort. Are these pleasant inmates that we should cling to them, and invite them to abide with us in another life ? Shall we love the poison offered to our lips by them who will make us as bad and as unhappy as they are, if we let them do so ?

It will do no good to smooth this anger over and bid it be quiet and bide its time. There are those

who will surely blow the smouldering fire into flame, if not in this life, then in the other; and suffer we must. Better, far better, would it be to ask for the help which is never withheld from those who ask it in earnest, and with that help face the poisonous thing, and root it out, and let the love which it has driven away return to us and bring us peace.

V.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. — Matt. vi. 19.

The analogous passage, in Luke xii. 33, commands us to “provide bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not.” We may gather treasures, and store them up, and provide for and hope for their permanency. But that they may not pass away, a higher end and aim than mere selfish enjoyment must gather them, and the happiness they impart must be born of a higher love than the love of this world; or the decay and ruin which await all the things of, and all the happiness that begins and ends with, this world will assuredly fall upon them.

The light [or, more precisely translated, the lamp] of the body is the eye; if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! — Matt. vi. 22, 23.

If we would know the spiritual sense of this passage, we must think of the spiritual body and the spiritual eye; or of the soul, and of that intellectual faculty by which we look for and discern truth. Both in Greek and in English, “singleness,” and its opposite, “duplicity,” have a physical and also a moral meaning. The reason is that the moral meaning corresponds to the physical meaning. If a man is trying to see two different things at once, they will cast a confused image upon the eye and the brain, and he will see neither clearly. If he has two opposite ends in view at the same time, he will attain to neither, for he cannot see clearly the truth that belongs to either. If, from ambition, or fear of the consequences, or hope of reward, he endeavors to do good, and all the time he is seeking merely selfish ends, he can see nothing clearly, and understand nothing that he sees. The very lamp of his mind, his intellectual faculty, is in the same condition in which a man’s eyes are, when, from disease or injury, they do not turn in the same direction; one sees one thing, and the other sees another, and the images mingle and break up each other. The eye is not single.

If one seeks only the true and the good in faith and life, that which he seeks he will find. The truth he needs will fill his mind with light, and he will walk as in the day. But if worldliness will come in and mingle itself with all his thoughts and all his aims and all his conduct, it must bring darkness with it; and how great will be that darkness!

No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. — Matt. vi. 24.

Here, as so often in the Scriptures, the statement has a two-fold form; one referring to the affections, the other to the understanding. If we have two masters in our affections, we shall love one and hate the other. If we have them in our faith, we shall believe in the one and hold the other in contempt.

When the natural man hears that he cannot serve God and Mammon, he fears that his external life will fail and all his external needs be unsatisfied. And then he is told to look at the world around him, and see its abundance and its beauty, and trust that the Providence which takes care of that will take care of him.

How hard this lesson is, and how blind and deaf we are to it! The great mass of mankind is busy in producing food. They plough, they sow, they reap. How many of them remember who it is that

makes the earth fit for culture, and bids the seasons return in their order, and waters the fields and warms them, and ripens the grain. Do we not think that all this comes of itself, and that nothing more is needed than our labor to secure the fruits? Our Father's mercy brings vicissitude and uncertainty over the whole, and so weakens somewhat this fearful falsity, and compels us to see another power than our own, working where we work, and determining whether our work shall be successful. All races in all ages have acknowledged this, and had their festivals of prayer when the seed was sown, and when the harvest came. Something, perhaps much, was done in this way to break the force of a most mischievous delusion.

And now a stronger light is shed upon these laws of the divine mercy than ever shone on them before. We are taught that the whole force of Nature in all its activities is the divine love working, always and in all things, for the good of man; working, first in time and in appearance, for his body and his external needs, but, within all this, for his eternal welfare; so governing all things, in their smallest forms and minutest events, that they shall subserve this one end; constraining men, so far as that is possible without impairing their spiritual freedom, in such wise that they may not fall into deeper wretchedness; and offering to all, at every hour and every

moment, the means of rising, ever rising, if they will only recognize and welcome and co-operate with the love that watches over them.

Nor is this all. We are also taught that the whole external world of man corresponds to his whole internal world. Therefore, the working of Providence in the external world and for the external needs of man is, throughout and in all things, the embodiment and representative of His working within man for his salvation. When men shall learn this lesson, dead Nature will rise from the grave in which it has lain so long, and live for us; it will have a new voice, or rather the voice that has always spoken with none to hear will then be heard and understood. We shall see the fowls of the air and listen to their songs of gladness; we shall look upon the lilies as they grow, and on the green mantle that clothes the fields; and they will be the perpetual symbol, the mirror without break or stain, which reveal to us the love and wisdom and power of our Father. Science will diligently gather her treasures, and rejoice to find them the servants of religion. They will all tell us, as they tell the angels, that He is working hitherto, and we may work even with Him, and receive from His infinite mercy even of His own happiness, until our cup is full.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, nor what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? — Matt. vi. 25.

The Greek words here translated “take no thought” mean, literally, “be not anxious in your soul.” Dean Alford, a recent and excellent commentator on the Scriptures, says: “The English translation, ‘take no thought,’ does not express the sense, but gives rather an exaggeration of the command, and thus makes it unreal and nugatory.” He says so, because thought for the morrow, if it be rational in kind and degree, is a duty; and yet the command as here expressed is, “take *no* thought.”

That the word *thought* here means anxiety is certain. At the time when the received English translation was made, writers, and probably conversers, often used the word *thought* in this sense. Thus Shakspeare says, “sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.” The command therefore is, Be not anxious about the future. And our Lord, in the ten remaining verses of this chapter, enforces this command with reasons why we should take no thought — that is, have no anxiety — for the morrow.

All these reasons may be summed up in the conviction of God’s care and mercy, which we should derive from the manifestation of that mercy in the care which He takes of all His creatures. And certain

it is that we should derive this conviction from the love, wisdom, and power exhibited in the universe even to our dull eyes. And certain it also is that all religious considerations, and especially those upon which the light of the latest revelation falls, should confirm and deepen this conviction. And yet this is a command which it is impossible for most of us, perhaps for any, fully to obey while we live on earth.

Fear is an instrument of which our Father makes great use in effecting our reformation. Common sayings show how constantly we are assailed by fears which prove to be unfounded: as that most men suffer more from misfortunes which do not happen than from those which do; and the old proverb that it is only the unexpected which comes. Fear is also regarded as itself a great calamity. Thus Montaigne, the celebrated French essayist, begins an interesting essay on Fear, with "There is nothing I fear so much as fear." I think, however, that there is some mistake about this.

Men differ in nothing more than in their susceptibility to fear. While some are comparatively free from it and seldom anticipate trouble, others are never without anxiety, and some are overwhelmed by it. If now we remember that all men, absolutely without exception, need and undergo the discipline of suffering in some form and measure,

because only through it can they learn what evil things are in them, and then learn to hate them, — may we not regard it as of divine mercy, that, where reform can be effected by fear and anxiety, they are permitted to do their work of mercy, and actual calamity is withheld for the reason that it is not necessary? We are, or we might be, sure that no suffering of any kind ever comes to us unless it is needed, and that it never comes in any severer form or in any greater measure than is needed. Whatever may be the outward aspect or the immediate effect of that which befalls us, the only certain thing is that it is the *best*, just the best, thing for us. This is certain, unless God's love or wisdom or power are imperfect, or something beside God rules the universe. Now if fear, even fantastic and irrational fear, will suffice to break or loosen the chains of self-love, of worldliness, or impurity, it is permitted to exercise its reforming influence, and the calamity feared is withheld because the good effect it might produce is accomplished without it.

There seem to be those for whom fear is thus sufficient, and they are not often smitten with misfortune, although their lives are darkened by almost constant anxiety. There are others with whom fear would not have this wholesome influence, and they go through life sanguine and hopeful, seldom

fearing, though they pass from misfortune to misfortune. And there are those who need to have both of these kinds of discipline: fear comes and dwells with them, and what they fear comes also to complete the work. Perhaps, too, every one in different states needs and has all these experiences; sometimes fear only, sometimes unfeared and unexpected calamity, sometimes fear followed by the misfortune which sent its shadows before.

In all this boundless diversity of experience, only one thing is certain: fear of suffering and actual suffering are both and equally instruments of Divine Providence, and neither the one nor the other is ever permitted to assail us, unless unerring wisdom sees that it may be good for us.

But when fear and anxiety assail us, and "thought for the morrow" makes our nights sleepless and our hearts faint, and Giant Despair seems drawing near, is there nothing for us to do, and no help to be had? Far from it. Just then is there the most for us to do, and just then may help be nearest; for it is just then that we may strive for and perhaps win the greatest blessing that a human being can receive.

"Blessed is he that maketh the Lord his trust." Again and again is this divine truth declared in the Word in many different forms. Blessed indeed is he who trusteth in the Lord; blessed far beyond

what he can be who trusteth in himself, in his skill, or his energy and strength, or his good fortune, or in any thing but the goodness of his Father. And it is this very blessing that the anxieties which rend our hearts may open them to receive. They show us how feeble is our trust in our Father; they suggest to us considerations derived from our own experience of His care, or from the evidences of that care which we may see all around us, and thus excite us to effort to strengthen our trust. The effort itself will bring some relief, and it may drive the devil of distrust away and give us the blessing of trust.

Yes, fear is a calamity; and we should avoid it if we can, and escape from it when we can. But there is only one way to avoid it or to escape from it, only one antagonist strong enough to overcome it and drive it away, and that is trust in the Lord; trust in Him as a Father who is ever watching over us to do us good, whose love cannot fail, whose wisdom is greater than ours and tells Him what is good for us without the possibility of mistake, and whose power all the devils in hell cannot resist.

How many we see who seem to go on from success to success, in their efforts to win honor and place, or to heap up wealth, or to make the most of life in some other way! Do we call them happy? Sometimes we see the canker that corrodes the

heart, the skeleton in the house. Whether we see it or not it is there, and fear and care and trouble dwell with them as with other men. They who trust in the Lord, and they alone, know what peace is. They are sure that the unfailing love of their Father is ever going forth to guide them and guard them and cleanse them and bless them. When sorrow that comes to all comes to them, they are sure that it is His instrument for good. When anxious fears beset them, they know what has opened the door to them; the cry goes up from their hearts, "Lord, I believe! help thou mine unbelief!" and the cry itself brings some relief.

Perhaps they have been comfortable for a long time, and their faith has gone to sleep. But the tempest and the threatening waves admonish them, and wake their faith into new life; and then they find that He, their God and their Saviour, has bid the tempest cease, and is leading them again by still waters.

In hours of natural darkness, spiritual light may shine. Then the future is almost present with us. We gain a firmer belief and a surer hold of the unending life which awaits us and may be very near. We have a distincter sense of the immeasurable worth of that life, and of the worthlessness of this transitory life except as it is the appointed means of making that unending life one of perfect trust

and unbroken peace. When this light shines upon us, the fears and troubles of this life are little more than shadows of fleeting clouds.

Still, it must be true that only in that unending life can our trust be constant and our peace unbroken. All anxiety, whatever be its subject, shows that our confidence in God is imperfect: but this confidence while we live must be imperfect. Only a view so lofty that it embraces the whole series of effects, can prevent all anxiety. We may believe that no sparrow falls to the ground without our Father's knowledge; but we know that the sparrow does fall. When the clouds are thickest and blackest, we may be very sure that beyond them the sun is shining, and will scatter them and then pour forth his light and his warmth. But now the clouds are there, and we cannot see the sun. Let us not impute this to ourselves as a sin, but make it the ground of hope, for "whom He loveth He chasteneth;" and let us in the fear and sorrow that we feel, see the evidence that He is caring for us, and is leading us to Himself.

Anxiety, fear, trouble! you are welcome, if only you will cleanse us, and lift us from the dust to which we cleave, and enable our Father to renew a right spirit within us. The night that gathers about us may still be dark and stormy, but if we have faith and trust in Him, in the darkest hour we

shall be sure that morning will come, and that, in the words of the Psalm, "in the morning we shall hear His loving kindness, for we trust in Him."

VI.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs ; neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. — Matt. vii. 6.

One peculiarity of the race of dogs is its indefinite variety. It includes animals of very various forms and qualities, and of every degree of strength and ferocity, from the bull-dog to the lap-dog. But in one thing they are agreed. They are all self-seekers ; only self-seekers. They are domesticated and made useful as watch-dogs, and sometimes as sheep-dogs ; or their instinctive desire for slaughter and prey is trained to assist men who have the same desire ; or they are companions of those whose animal desire to pet and fondle makes them its objects ; or they gratify the love of dominion of those who rejoice in possessing something that is perfectly subservient.

In all this there may be no great harm. We have, all of us, dogs in our own nature. Every creature that lives, lives because it corresponds to and embodies and represents something in man ; and the whole animal world is gathered into human nature. Men and women and children may find in the vast

variety of dogs something which so responds to a want of their nature, that the companionship of these creatures is pleasant to them. But let us know what they are. They are all self-seekers, and only self-seekers. We read anecdotes of tenderness, affection, and constancy in dogs. But these seeming good qualities appear to spring from their habitually associating all thought of food, shelter, and care with their masters. In Eastern countries, dogs do not hold the same place as domestic and personal pets as in Europe and America. They are numerous in some cities, and useful as consumers of garbage; but seem to be ownerless and homeless.

Dogs are often mentioned in Scripture, and in such wise as to show their correspondence. Thus, in Revelation: "Without [the holy city] are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Here dogs head the list of those to whom heaven is closed. And they are the only animals mentioned among the evil-doers who are "without" the city. There is no place for them in heaven, or for those who are like them; but men who have become like dogs find room enough and a home which suits them in hell.

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs." We may understand from these words, that to men of such a character it is worse than useless to offer

truths which inculcate holiness. But we may also understand much more. We may understand that the Lord and His angels so deal with us; for they withhold such truths from us, unless the self-seeking, the lust, and bestiality which dogs embody are suppressed in ourselves.

We must not cast our pearls before swine. The nose of the hog is lengthened until it is almost a proboscis, and it is protected by gristle which is almost horn. He is so constructed externally, that he may follow the bent of his nature and turn up the ground for food. These animals correspond to and represent merely sensual, or rather sensuous, persons. They think only sensuous thoughts, and in a sensuous way. They judge of all truths sensuously, and see none that sensuous thought cannot discover and make use of. They root in the earth for the food of their minds. Their souls "cleave unto the dust." On that plane such persons may have much power, culture, and activity; and they hold in simple contempt whatever rises above it. If we tell such persons spiritual truths, they will be sure to trample them under their feet, and sink them down into the earthliness they love and live in. Nor is this all: they will turn again and rend us. They suggest objections, doubts, and difficulties, and for a time at least cloud our perceptions of spiritual truth and disturb our faith.

How is it, then, with the swine within ourselves? This swinish disposition, while strong in some and weak in others, is common to us all, and few are able to escape from it altogether so long as they live on earth. Let us know it, and understand it, and beware how we cast our pearls before it. All gems and precious stones correspond to spiritual truths, and pearls are among the most beautiful. Even if we have sold all we have and bought the pearl of great price; if we have exchanged the fallacies and falsities which had beset us for the central truth of all truth, the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, — let us be careful not to expose that pearl of pearls to the assaults or the insidious hostility of merely sensuous reasoning. We may be sure that the enemies of our souls infuse into our minds all such reasoning, and we should resist and avoid it as we would resist and avoid them.

Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. — Matt. vii. 7.

These and similar texts tell us that the Lord is ever ready to come to us, *if* we will come to Him; ever ready to give, *if* we will ask Him. A generous and free-hearted man would make no such condition, but would give before he was asked. One who could spare something which his neighbor needed and which he was willing to give to him,

but would not give until his neighbor came and begged it of him, would be thought, and rightly, hard and unkind. Why does God treat us so?

The truths now given for the New Church answer this question. They tell us that the Lord knows what we need far better than we do, and is far more willing to give than we are to receive. But that He *cannot* give until we ask; and that He insists upon our asking, because that will enable Him to give.

The truths which tell us this all relate to the great doctrine of Proprium, or Ownhood. This doctrine is wholly new to the human mind. No philosophy and no religion has ever taught it, because it has been withheld until men could be ready to receive it. And we are even now but imperfectly ready, and our reception of the doctrine is imperfect and our understanding of it obscure. But we may understand something about it.

This doctrine may be stated in its most general form thus: The Lord is life. He alone *is* life in Himself. We live because He gives us of His life to be our own; so entirely our own, that while we live from Him we are at perfect freedom to be what we will, as if our life originated in ourselves.

One of our difficulties about this doctrine is that it is hard to liberate our minds from the idea of time and the effect of that idea, even when we are

thinking of matters with which time has nothing to do. For time belongs to us and not to God; to the body and its world, and not to the soul and its world. Our Creator did not give to us when we were born, or at any other time, life, on which we have lived ever since and shall live to-morrow. He gives us life always, continually, incessantly. He gives at each moment the life of that moment and not the life of any other moment. He creates now as He did at the beginning; for the persistent existence of the world and all its parts is a constant and continual creation.

And when He gives life or being, He gives in that life or being, and as an essential element of it, the perfect ownership of that life or being. Hence, He gives to every thing to be itself and not another thing; and to every man to be himself and not another man. If we could but understand this better, we should see in it a proof and an effect of the infinite love of our Creator, and of the infinite unselfishness of that love. We should see this in the fact that He, the infinite, gives His own life to His creatures (for there is no life but His life), and gives it to them to be their own; so perfectly their own, that they have not the slightest consciousness whence it comes. Because His love is perfect, He gives His own life *away* from Himself, to be the life of those whom He has created in His own image.

And yet not away from Himself; for without this continuous inflow of being from Him all that is would cease to be. And over the life He is ever giving He ever watches with infinite care and love; and yet because His love is perfect He leaves the man to be himself, and to be whatever the man himself chooses to be. Another reason why it is difficult to understand this is that it is hard for us to attain to an unselfishness so complete that we can give without asking for recompense of any kind, and without wishing for any thing but an acceptance of the gift, or any desire but that a good use may be made of what we give. We see in the papers the contribution of "A Friend," by some one who withholds his name; or a man dies, and we learn how generous and liberal he has been in secrecy and silence, and we admire this unselfish beneficence. It is indeed the faintest shadow of His unselfishness who creates a universe and gives to it His own life, and withholds from it all knowledge of the giver, until He is able, by imparting to His rational creatures some knowledge of Himself, to make them capable of receiving more abundant gifts of life and happiness.

The better we shall understand this doctrine of Proprium, the more clearly we shall see as an inevitable consequence of it that every man's character, condition, and eternal destiny are in his own

hands. But how can we believe this when we see so many persons who are bound and enslaved by circumstances? How enormous are the differences in men's surroundings and capacities! Some have all the comforts, not to say the luxuries, of life, and vigorous intellects, and the advantages of education, and favorable circumstances of all kinds through all their lives; while others are born in squalid poverty and are seemingly condemned to abide in it, with dull intellects, and surroundings which keep them down almost to the level of brutes.

But if we were only able to look deeper, and see things which are permanent as we now see transitory things, we should know the worthlessness of these outside matters *in themselves*. We should discern the true differences among men. We should see that some men bring into the world with them, tendencies, dispositions, and characteristics which can be bent to good and permanent results by circumstances of one kind, while other men need other ways of living and surroundings of an exactly opposite kind. Of all this we know nothing, and no one can know any thing but He that looks through all externals and all disguises, and sees the heart itself and all its needs. And for every one that lives He provides with perfect wisdom just that manner of being and those influences from without, which are adapted to his peculiar state.

Of this we may be sure : no man goes to heaven or to hell merely because of the inherited dispositions or propensities he brought into life with him, or merely because of his position, his surroundings, or his opportunities. If he goes upward, it is because in the spiritual freedom which is preserved for every man, he chooses good rather than evil. If he goes downward, it is because in that freedom he has chosen evil rather than good.

The differences among men in respect to external position, circumstances, and opportunities are infinite, and the differences in the dealings of Divine Providence with them are as many and as great ; but one law embraces and pervades them all. This law is that every thing about all men, and every influence to which they are subjected, is always that which, *with their consent*, will adapt them for the best place, the best home, they can occupy in the infinite variety of our Father's mansions, and the best use they can perform through eternity.

With their consent. This is the one essential. Every thing is so governed and provided as to *lead* them through all the changes and experiences of this life to that best place and home ; but nothing is ever done or permitted which would overcome their free and final choice, or compel them to go one way or the other. They must *ask*, or the gifts of the spirit cannot be given to them, because they

are in no condition to receive such gifts. They must hunger after righteousness, or the bread of heaven would not nourish them.

We may then see why He cannot open the door until we knock, cannot give unto us until we ask. If it were otherwise, if spiritual gifts were bestowed upon us before we were ready for them, they could become ours only as they were forced upon unwilling minds and hearts by omnipotence. Then where and what should we be? Subdued and crushed; our freedom and with it our individuality gone. We should no longer be ourselves, but only puppets or machines worked by irresistible power. Could we in this way rise to heaven? Would this be a heavenly state, or can we think of angels in this condition?

We are so made by divine wisdom and mercy that this is impossible. Our conduct can be forced, but our loves cannot be. Our actions may be controlled by others, but our characters must be formed by ourselves. If we go to heaven, it must be because in our freedom we have chosen to be good rather than evil. And when in heaven our hearts are swelling with gratitude, there is nothing for which we shall be more thankful than for the freedom which was our Father's perpetual gift, and in which, by which, and through which, He has been able to lead us to Himself.

What man is there of you, who, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone; or if he ask a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him! — Matt. vii. 11.

In the New Church we are taught that the love which a man has for his children is but the Lord's love in him. It is his, given to him to be his, and therefore only such in quantity or strength as can become his. In the Lord this is an infinite, universal, pure, and perfect paternal love. In each man it is so much in quantity, and is made by the mediums through which it passes such in quality, as it must be to be received by him and become his. If, thus enfeebled and modified, this paternal love in man, if not perverted, can give so much good, what is the measure of the good which this same love in its source, its power, and its perfection must prompt our Father to give! There is no measure to His desire to give, and no other measure to the reception of all good by man but his own true and actual willingness to receive.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. — Matt. vii. 12.

This is the Golden Rule which distinguishes between the Christian system of ethics, and all others.

Resist selfishness, and put it out of your heart and your life, and you have removed the barrier which closed your heart against blessings that the Lord would give. That you might overcome self-love and cast it off, the law was given, and all prophecy. If you have learned to love your neighbor as yourself, you have received that very love from the Lord through His angels; and the happiness of heaven will come with it into your heart, and will abide there.

Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. — Matt. vii. 13.

There are three things which it is very difficult for us to understand and believe. One is, that the whole nature we inherit is prone to evil. Another is, that we may cast off this evil in our own freedom, and receive all good in the place of it. The third is, that the Lord and His angels are ever with us, giving us all the help we need in doing this good work in our own freedom.

That all men have in them something of depravity, and that the youngest children show signs of this, is easily seen. But the natural man will say that it is just as true, as certain, and as obvious that all men have some goodness, and that young children show this plainly. And if we bring the question home to ourselves, while we are all con-

scious of much that is evil, even a tender conscience permits us to believe that we have in us something of good. In what sense, then, is it true that our whole inherited nature, the whole ownhood that is ours by birth, is bad?

To get an answer to this question, we must form a just and definite idea of what we mean by evil and what we mean by good.

There is none good but one, — God. In Him is perfect goodness, and only goodness. The essence of this goodness is love, — love for others. This in Him is infinite and infinitely active; and the universe, comprehending all existence, is the perpetual effect of the perpetual activity of this love.

The essence of the exact opposite to the divine goodness is love of self. Into all men this divine love flows, and becomes their life; such life as belongs to them. Men have no power of closing their hearts against the divine love; for, if they did, they would instantly perish. They must receive it that they may live; and whatever they are, it becomes in them all the desire or affection they have. The power is given to them with this love of not only receiving it, but preserving it unperverted; and then it remains love. Because they have power to preserve it unperverted, they have power to pervert it; for, if they had no power to pervert it, it would not be they who preserved it unperverted.

The infinite desire of infinite love, to have objects to whom it could impart the highest happiness, did not permit God to make men to be only passive objects. It caused Him to make them active and responsive agents. And that they may be such active and responsive agents life is given them to be their own; and with it they act and respond to and co-operate with the divine action, and are capable of receiving all the happiness arising from this active co-operation with God.

And now let us return to the question, What is it to be good, and what is it to be bad? When life flows into our will and makes that live, we may, if we choose, cause that to become in us the love of our Lord and Father, and, as founded upon that, the love of the neighbor. If we do this, and in the degree in which we do this, we are good. But suppose we do not this: then we do the opposite to this. We permit this life to fall under the influence of our natural disposition, and it becomes selfishness, and takes on some of the innumerable forms of selfishness and sin.

Why is this our natural disposition? Why are we so made that it is easy and natural to be bad, while we can be good only by resistance and effort?

The essence of all evil is selfishness. The essence of all good is love to the Lord and the neighbor. The above question may then take this form: Why

are we so made as to be naturally inclined to selfishness?

A man must be conscious of himself, must think of himself, must care for himself, or he would lose all that makes him to be himself. Wherever he stands, and whatever he is, he must refer things to himself, or he could have no perception of his own place, no knowledge of his own duty. If we could imagine a man perfectly free from all thought of himself, we should think of one who had no individuality and who was not himself. He who never had any thought of himself, or any care for himself, would never supply any of the needs or avoid any of the common dangers of life, and would soon die. But we cannot imagine such a man, for this tendency to self-reference is an essential element of human nature, and without it there would be no human nature. It follows that this self-love is an essential element in human nature, — essential to its life and to its actions. If wholly without it, a condition we can hardly imagine, the man would have no individuality, no personality.

This tendency, or this self-love, is not in itself bad, nor good. Which of the two it is depends upon what it becomes. If not lifted above itself, if it is indulged and strengthened until it rules in the character in its own interest and for its own sake, it becomes wholly bad, and is the source of all

that is evil. This is the greatest calamity which can befall a man. It is the sum of all calamity. It is precisely that thing against which the whole providence of God is ever working. It is the exact opposite of divine love; and He, with and through all the good influences which can act upon us, constantly endeavors to lead us to raise our self-love out of the depths of selfishness, to make it the instrument of use to others, to subordinate it to the loves of the Lord and the neighbor. So far as this condition is established, a man takes thought and care for himself, for his life and health and strength and prosperity, that he may use all of these in the service of the Lord and the neighbor. He is not before his own thought as the *end*, but as the *means*; and then it becomes the purpose of his life to be the living, active agent of divine goodness. Then, and in that degree, is the man good; for then, and in that degree, does he receive and put forth in his life the divine goodness.

This cannot be without self-thought, self-regard, self-love. And, therefore, man has all these as essentials of his nature. The natural tendency of all of them is to terminate in themselves, and thus become selfishness. This is the natural tendency of the self-love that is born with us, and it is its strong tendency. And just as all happiness arises from the subordination of self-love to higher loves,

so all misery and all degradation arise from this natural tendency of self-love, when that is unchecked and permitted to have its own way. And every human being has, from the first moment of his existence through all his existence, help entirely sufficient to enable him to raise this self-love out of selfishness, *if he will*; and cause it to be, in the manner already stated, the happy instrument of higher loves.

It is certainly possible to have a purely selfish natural love for one's neighbor. What we call natural goodness becomes this, if it be not elevated above it. We then may love dearly those who belong to us, but we love them *only* because they belong to us and are parts of ourselves, although we do not know that we so love them. We love our neighbor because he is of use to us, or contributes in some way to our gratification. And if we could look into the loves we cherish most, should we not, all of us, find these best and dearest loves wofully tainted with this insidious selfishness?

It is even possible to have a selfish love of the Lord, just as the Jews had when they loved Him because they thought He loved them better than others, and would favor them against others. That only is an unselfish love of the Lord which looks upon Him as the Father of all His children, and regards the mercy shown to them as mercy shown to us. Then only can we see how great that mercy is; then only can we love our neighbor as ourselves.

We often say in praise of some thoroughly benevolent and useful man, that "he thinks only of others, and never of himself." These are good words as expressive of our hatred of selfishness; but, to be true words, we must mean only that he thinks first of others, and of himself only for the sake of others. Then is he indeed a good man, and self-love holds its right place within him. Asceticism, common enough in its milder forms, if it be sincere, hates and fears selfishness, and knows no better way to escape from it than by crushing out self-love, but this is not the right way. The Syrian monk, Simeon Stylites, who, fourteen hundred years ago, left his monastery and lived for nearly forty years on the top of a pillar sixty feet high, that he might be sure to escape from luxury and sin, and preached often to crowds that gathered about the foot of his pillar, may have been one of the most selfish of men.

We have said that self-love is an inherent element of human nature; and that its natural tendency is to end in itself, and become selfishness, and through selfishness end in all evil and all misery. Because of this strong and universal natural tendency, the gate is wide, and broad is the way that leads to destruction. This tendency can be resisted and overcome only by earnest and persistent effort, only by a combat with inherited proclivities to evil, and with our own bad habits and passions which

indulgence has made strong; and this effort and combat must sometimes be almost more than we can endure, for they must be our effort and our combat in our own freedom, although with strength given us that we may so combat, and with all the help that can be given to us to use this strength aright. Therefore is the way of life strait and narrow. But, when our Lord says that many find the first and few the last, we must remember that, in the spiritual sense, numbers cease to be numbers. Then it means that, when we would walk in the way of life, we shall encounter many, very many enemies of our souls. Who that has tried to walk in this way does not know what a host they are?

VII.

Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil-fruit. — Matt. vii. 17.

The remainder of this sermon on the mount, verses 15 to 27, teaches that the only test of truth and of goodness is conduct. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Only he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven "who *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven." The wise man builds his house upon this rock; the foolish man "who heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* them not," builds his house upon the sand. This law must always have been known wherever the distinction

between good and evil was known. It is here set forth with the utmost force and directness, in the plainest words and with a most striking illustration. What more can be said of it? Nothing, unless it be an explanation of the reason of this law, and the foundation on which it rests.

Affection prompts thought, and through thought works itself out into act. If it be a real and living affection, it will necessarily prompt the thought by means of which it may go forth into act, and will necessarily by means of this thought go forth into this act, unless external hinderances prevent. The affection and the thought are in this act, and in it they are rooted and fixed. To use Swedenborg's phraseology, affection and truth are ultimated in the act. The Latin word "ultimus" means only the "last." Action is the last of the series. Without it affection and truth are imperfect, and have borne no fruits. In it they have reached their end and are completed.

Every one acknowledges the difference between profession and practice; but we are not always aware of its importance. A man may understand a truth, assert it positively, and even use it to advance his reputation or accomplish some other selfish purpose; but if this is all, when he dies, it will disappear from his mind as if he had never known it. It is appropriated, or becomes his own,

when he loves it as God's truth, for the wisdom it gives or the good to which it guides him. So, if a good influence inspires a good affection within him, he may play with it, and think how good he is for feeling so good; but this goodness is not yet his own. It forms no integral part of his character or of himself; but if it is implanted in actual life, or in earnest desire to live it if possible, he carries it with him where death will have no power over it.

In the Scriptures, eating and drinking are constantly used to represent and signify appropriation. Thus, we understand the solemn words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you," if we know that His flesh denotes His divine good, and His blood His divine truth, and that these we must receive and appropriate. When we eat food, it is not our own, or it does not become a part of ourselves, until it is digested and assimilated, or "appropriated;" and then it is our own and a part of ourselves. And if the good and the true (which are the food and the drink of the spirit) are thus appropriated by us by loving and living them, then our natural "proprium," or selfhood or ownhood, which is of itself inclined to evil, or spiritually dead, begins to be vivified or regenerated by an appropriation of goodness from the Lord. A new heart and a new spirit are given us, and we are building our house upon a rock.

And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Matt. x. 1.

He "sent them forth" to do the work which He had empowered them to do. Then "He commanded them" as set forth in the residue of this chapter.

When the Lord calls unto Him what the apostles represent and signify, which are the same that was represented and signified by the twelve tribes of Israel, and that is the principles and elements of a church; or, personally, when He calls those who are governed by these principles and make these elements of life their own by loving them and living them, He "sends them forth." He gives them the power and lays upon them the duty of imparting to others, as they can, the spiritual truth that they have learned and the affections which have been given them, and so of casting out all uncleanness and healing all manner of spiritual disease. And His commands or directions to His apostles express the laws and methods of this cleansing and curative influence.

Of very much of this command, the spiritual sense is obvious to those who believe there is a spiritual sense, and who look for it. Of another part, this sense lies deeper within. Thus, in reading verse 13, it may not be seen at once, that when

such principles of truth and good enter into a house, or into a state or condition of mind or character, which is worthy of them, they are welcome, and the peace they bring is received and felt. If it be not worthy of them, the efforts to bring peace to that house are ineffectual, and return to those who make them, confirming and enlarging their own peace. And Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of destruction, are but the types of the destruction which must fall upon the state of mind or the persons who will not hear these words, because they reject this good and truth. The apostles (which is but the English form of the Greek word meaning persons sent forth) are told to be wise and yet harmless; to be wise as the serpent, but instead of his craft to have the innocence of the dove.

They must expect persecution of every kind. For they who regard the Lord himself with the hatred due unto Beelzebub, must consider them devilish. They are brought before kings and governors, but the Spirit of their Father will take care of them and give them what to say.

All this, with all the details and particulars, are and always will have some application in a literal sense to those who, like the apostles, do what they can to disseminate spiritual truth and good, and cure the spiritual diseases of mankind. But within this lies an application far more universal, more

interesting to us and to all men. It is to the spiritual truths and principles which, within ourselves, go forth into all that forms our characters, sent by Him from whom they come to change and purify and heal and save us. It is there, within, that the conflict rages,—a never-ending conflict; for, if there be moments of rest and peace, soon must the conflict be resumed, to cease only with this life. They who know what this conflict is, know the persecution they undergo from their own tendencies to self-love and its brood of proclivities to sin. They know they must “beware of men;” not of other men, but of the natural man within their own hearts. They know that they must be “brought before governors and kings,” or that these spiritual truths are brought before the ruling principles of their own unregenerate nature, and subjected to all the denial, perplexity, and doubt which they can raise. But the Spirit of their Father inspires the answer, which will at length bring light upon the darkness. They learn that He, in His truth, comes to bring a sword, and not to bring peace until the sword of the truth has won a victory. They know that a man’s foes are those of his own household, and that these enemies of their salvation excite and keep up the internal conflict which is meant by brother against brother, father against child, a man against his father, and

a daughter against her mother. And when the spiritual truths they have learned search their own hearts, exploring their dark corners and bringing before the consciousness the self-love and impurity hidden there, they know that there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that it shall not be made known. They know the comfort there is in remembering His merciful care for all His creatures, for the sparrows, and even for the hairs of the head. They take up their cross and follow Him, glad to lose their natural selfish and sinful life, and find a new, a spiritual, a heavenly life. They endure unto the end, and they are saved.

And His disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Matt. xxiv. 1, 2.

When our Lord uttered this prophecy of the destruction of the temple, the disciples asked Him, "When shall these things be, and what the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world?" They thought the end of the world was very near; and, understanding His words only in their literal sense, they could not think otherwise. He tells them, "This generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled." In all the ages of Christianity, these words have been understood literally, and

have proved a stumbling-block to many. That the disciples were mistaken is certain. To us the spiritual sense is given; and we know the truth, the inexpressibly solemn truth, of all this appalling description.

In the first place, it is a description of the decline and the ending of the church. He was then establishing; for this is meant by "this generation." It was this spiritual generation, the age or epoch then born. For to Him a thousand years are but as a day; and the successive churches, born, growing, declining, and dying, are as the spiritual generations of mankind.

In their spiritual sense, these words and those which follow describe the spiritual future of the church; the wars and woes which should come to its spirit; fearful conflicts of falsity with truth, and of falsities with each other, that would end with the triumph of falsity and evil and the death of spiritual truth and goodness, and therewith the death of the church.

All of these things, all of these steps in the decline of the church in the spirits of men, had their counterparts in the spiritual world; and such is the correspondence between that world and the natural world that there could not fail to be some effects produced in the external world, wars and conflicts and distresses, which seemed to be, and

have always been, regarded as the fulfilment of these awful words. But of some of the most impressive there could not be, and certainly never has been, any thing which could be looked upon as the literal fulfilment. The sun and the moon might be darkened, but how could the stars fall? If regarded, as men did then regard them, as points of glittering light, they might fall to the earth; but we know that the earth could not hold the millionth part of them. But the sun is darkened when love to the Lord and the neighbor loses its life and light; for that love is to the spiritual world within man what the sun is to the natural world outside of him. The moon borrows her light from the sun, and a true and genuine faith derives all its light from love to the Lord and the neighbor; and, spiritually, the moon is said to give her light no longer, when that faith which she represents no longer illuminates the mind. And the stars, which are points of light of various degrees of brightness, represent and signify spiritual knowledges; and they are said to fall to the earth when the knowledges of spiritual things fade away and are lost in earthliness.

But here, too, as before, the spiritual sense of these words tells us that they are addressed to every man in every age. The Lord is ever consistent with Himself. As the whole of mankind, and its nations and societies, consist of individual

men, so similar laws and principles belong to the whole and to all its parts, greater or less ; and the same truths are applicable to persons, with only those modifications made necessary by their descent from the whole to its greater parts, and thence to its lesser and to its least parts.

This discourse begins with telling all who would be regenerated of the sorrows and conflicts they must undergo ; and all who take up the cross and endeavor to follow Him know this.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek, and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. — Matt. xi. 28-30.

These words were uttered by a man who was born of a Jewish mother, and lived and died in Palestine, nearly two thousand years ago. What inconceivable arrogance, or what boundless and incredible pretence and presumption, *if He were only a man*. There are many now who believe He was only a man, and they appear to agree that He was a man of extraordinary excellence. It is indeed quite a custom with those who believe He was only a man to heap upon Him words of laudation and admiration, and to imply that while only a man He was that in its perfection. And yet for a man who was no more in nature or in power than His fellows, and

who did not save Himself from a life of sorrow and a death of agony, to invite *all* men who suffer to come unto Him, and to promise that, if they would come unto Him, He would give them rest from all their burdens yea, from the whole varied misery of life, — what human presumption ever equalled this in measure or in kind !

But what if, while a man, He were not only a man; what if God, and God only, were His Father; what if He were God as well as man; what if He were Jehovah Himself, who had come to earth and had assumed a human form and nature, that He might come down to man ! Then what kindness and goodness, what an infinite tenderness of love, do these words express, and what unfailing consolation should they give !

The invitation is addressed to those who labor and are heavy-laden. There may be some persons who are never heavy-laden, and none are always so; but only to those who are heavy-laden, and when they are so, is the invitation given and this promise made. To all them are these words spoken, no matter why or how they suffer. It may be from some external calamity, or from fears which blacken their sky with midnight, or from a consciousness of failure and imperfection, or from remorse for sin and guilt which drives hope away and delivers them, bound hand and foot, to despair. All, all

alike, are bidden to come to Him. And, if they will but come, Omnipotence has promised to them all rest.

But how can we come to Him? We do not see nor hear nor touch Him. To the senses He is not present; and to the mind and thought, when we dwell on His infinitude, He is separated from us by a chasm as wide as the universe.

And yet it is certain that He would not invite us to come to Him, if we could not come. We need not ask the senses, for they have nothing to do in this matter. To the mind and thought He need be no longer distant, when we remember that He fills all space without being subject to space; we do not clearly understand this, but we may understand it well enough to escape from the sadness of the thought that God must be far, far away. Then, if we remember that it is His wisdom and His power which formed and fill and rule the universe, we may begin to see that He must be near every thing, everywhere. And then if we can recognize His love in His works, and in His care for ourselves, we may begin to see that it must enwrap us all around and permeate our whole being. And then if we know and remember that our very life is His life given to us—always and incessantly given; that our life is His life, is He Himself within us, ever causing us to live,—in these ways, and such

as these, we may come to a profound sense of His presence, and know and feel that He is near us and within our reach.

But how shall we reach Him, how lay hold of Him? In the first place, by obedience. He is perfect, and commands us to be perfect; but this can only mean to strive after perfection. Infinitely below it as we are, we may still look up to it. We take the first steps on our way to Him who is perfect, when we obey His laws and mend our lives; when we overcome our proclivities to wrong-doing; when we give up bad habits of acting, feeling, or thinking; when we become kinder and gentler and more just; more useful and less selfish and worldly, and more constantly regardful of our duties.

Then we come to Him by reaching forth after Him in acknowledgment and prayer, by faith in Him, trust in Him, and hope in Him. Yes, you say, I am able to believe this. I am able to believe, at least sometimes, that I have some faith, trust, and hope in Him; but how feeble they are! Perhaps they lighten my darkness a little, but not enough to show Him to me clearly, and not enough to save me from distress and dread for the future of this world or of the other. How can I make them more?

I know not how, unless it be by prayer, by lifting up the mind to Him all we can, and by continued

effort to *realize* the truths we know, and to see Him as He is, our ever loving Father. Even if our faith and trust and hope be little, let us strive to keep them alive, to cherish them as living seeds, for then they will surely grow, and will have eternity wherein to grow towards perfect peace. By such efforts as these, there may come to us a sense of self-surrender, of committing ourselves into the hands of our Father without asking any thing more than that His will may be done. This feeling will check a painful and impatient desire for more faith and more trust and more peace than our nature makes it possible for us *then* to have. We shall be sure that He desires that we should have these blessings more than we can desire it for ourselves; that under His nurture they will grow, and that in His own best time and way He will "perfect what concerneth us." Here will be at least the beginning of rest.

Behind all this lies the great question, the question of questions, — when the burden is lifted from us and the sky is clear, and we go back to the common activities and enjoyments of life, shall we go back to be just what we were before, or shall we carry a new spirit with us? Shall we take hold of our duties with a new and stronger feeling, looking on every use we perform as a divine service; caring for our neighbor's rights and interests as for our

own, and resisting and hating the evil things we saw so clearly in our hours of tribulation. Shall it be so with us? for if not so, then will the devils who left us for a while come back with more and worse, and find the houses readier for their occupation.

Tribulation: this word which we have just used occurs repeatedly in the New Testament, and the thing occurs repeatedly in life. The word itself contains a lesson. It is formed from a Latin word, "tribulatio," which is derived from "tribulum," a flail or threshing instrument, and tribulation means, literally, threshing. It is just this, and nothing else. If we have in us wheat which can be gathered into His garner, be sure that He will thresh us until the wheat is cleansed from the chaff; for it is not the chaff which He wishes to preserve.

He promises to give rest to all who are heavy-laden and come to Him. The burden may be disappointment, loneliness, poverty, sickness, the breaking up of a home, or it may be the fear of some one or more of these calamities. Then have we a right to hope that He will give us rest by giving what we wish for, more abundant means or returning health, or by removing the calamity or the fear from which we suffer? Possibly He will do this, but probably He will not. For just this calamity or this fear we needed for our spiritual good, and that is for our eternal welfare; and He

loves us too well and too wisely to make us comfortable for a short time and unhappy for a far longer time. How then can He give us rest?

If we come to Him with any faith and trust in Him, we shall feel that He is caring for us; that the sorrows we bewail are meant to be the means of blessing. Perhaps we shall see how they rebuke and weaken proclivities to wrong-doing or wrong-feeling which had held us in a bondage that, while we were comfortable, we liked and did not regard as bondage. Whether we perceive this effect or not, we shall know that this is what that sorrow came for. We shall help it do its work. Then, if the burdens are not lifted from us, their weight will be lifted from them. They will no longer press upon us with a pressure we cannot bear. We are no longer heavy-laden, for trust and hope lighten our burdens.

But it may be that our burdens are not of this external kind. They are of the soul: they are spiritual. They consist in the consciousness of wrong-doing: our shortcomings, our selfishness and worldliness, our sins against God and man, secret sins, it may be, which are known to none or to very few beside ourselves, — the recollection of all these has come to us, and abides with us day and night, and we are wretched and full of fears and very heavy-laden. And now what rest can He give us?

He cannot tell us that we are not as evil as we think, for we know that we are. He cannot tell us that sin is not hateful in His eyes and the enemy of our peace and the one thing which cannot enter into heaven, for we know that it is. How, then, can faith and trust in Him give us hope in Him, how can they give us rest? They can remind us of the price He paid for our redemption; they can make us sure that we are redeemed from bondage, and therefore *can* repent, and that when we mourn for our sins and hate them we do repent; and that, if we repent, He will "remove our iniquities as far from us as the west is from the east." He will let His truth shine upon us, because we are ready to see it; and it will tell us that this suffering has come to make us know our evils and hate and shun them, and that, if we hate and shun them, the opposite good will come to us from Him, and become our own and abide with us for ever. "Though we have lain among the pots, yet shall we be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." Not through any goodness originating in ourselves, but because He has put it in our power, perhaps by the very sorrows that afflict us, to discover and put far from us the seeds of death, and receive from Him and make our own the life of goodness and of peace.

More than this, Swedenborg assures us that in

these times of temptation and distress the Lord implants deep within our hearts, wholly without our consciousness or knowledge, heavenly states, which, hidden here, come forth in the great hereafter, and bear their fruits. Well may we call this a mystery of goodness; for how He does this is entirely beyond our feeble comprehension. But the fact we may understand and believe, with trembling thankfulness to Him who leads us through the dark and difficult ways of this life to another, where peace is unbroken and happiness eternal.

There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. — Matt. x. 26.

This revelation can take place only in another life; and if it must take place there, it might seem as if our whole earthly life of act or feeling or thought would be “uncovered,” and made manifest to all. We are taught that it is not quite so.

They who go from this world to another, carry with them the character they formed here. If they are hypocrites in heart, they retain not only their desire for, but some power of, hypocrisy; but it does not last long. Swedenborg tells us that the first stage of man’s spiritual existence is one of preparation. So also is this life; but with a difference. Here we prepare for another life by forming our characters.

There we begin the new life by preparing for the place or state we are ultimately to fill, by developing the characters we have formed. The ruling love or principle which men carry with them from this life to that life is, in most men, if not in all, more or less qualified and modified or disguised by opposing elements of character. The work we have to do in that "world of spirits," which is the first stage of spiritual existence, is to get rid of these opposing elements. The good are gradually delivered from the bad things which still infect them. They who are not good at heart are freed from the pretences or the apparent and unreal simulation of good, which while they were in this life deceived others and perhaps themselves. This process is indefinitely varied, being the very same for no two persons. In the beginning of it, this desire of hypocrisy may exist with much power of deception; but it soon passes away. Then the man, the real man, stands forth, and seems to himself and is seen by others just what he is.

Whatever is done, felt, or thought by any human being in this life, remains for ever inscribed upon his mind, and is within the reach of memory. This is the book of his life. It may be opened in the other life, and read by himself and others to the minutest detail. It is opened, in fact, just so far as is necessary to the manifestation of his character, so

that he may be known to himself and others for what he is. But it is opened and read no farther. If he is bad and does not know it, he is made to remember so much of his life as will teach him the needed lesson. If he knows and denies it, so much of his life is exhibited to others as shall strip his disguise away, and disclose to them what it is good for him that they should know.

If he is good, only so much of his past is brought vividly before him, or exhibited before others, as is necessary to cleanse away the remains of pride, of self-conceit and self-trust, and bring him to a clear perception that in and from himself he is only evil, and that whatsoever escape from evil or advance in goodness he has made, he owes it wholly and unreservedly to the mercy and the help of the Lord.

As the effect of all this, every man takes his place in the home he has builded for himself. There concealment is at an end. An angel wishes to conceal nothing; a devil can conceal nothing. The past has gone by. It did its work in preparing for the present; and, that work being done, the past is dead and buried.

Still it may be resuscitated. Swedenborg tells us that even the angels sometimes forget the abysses from which they have been lifted up, and then enough of their former states are permitted to revive as will reanimate their sense of their own

unworthiness, and give them new gratitude to Him who has saved them from themselves.

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. — Matt. x. 34.

This is one of those verses which seem to contradict our Lord's most emphatic declarations. Elsewhere we are told that "He comes to guide our feet into the way of peace;" the heavenly host who appeared to the shepherds proclaimed, "On earth, peace;" "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you;" "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."

In all ages of the Christian church, it has been seen, though obscurely, that all these declarations might be reconciled. This has been effected, mainly, by supposing that the promised peace was to be an internal peace, while the threatened sword referred to the worldly tribulations Christians would encounter. That He came to send a sword was verified in the persecutions of the early ages, for the sword of violence and death was often lifted against His disciples. The corresponding text in Luke xii. 51, suggests a more internal sword. "Suppose ye that I am come to send peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division." And our Lord then spoke of division in the same household: "three against two, and two against three." We

know that these texts, beside their literal external meaning, have a purely spiritual meaning. In that sense, the sword that the Lord sends is into our own hearts. He does come to send peace; and He sends a sword that He may send peace, nor can He send peace until the sword He sends has done its work. Yes, it is in our own hearts that the war rages, and is often very painful and distressing. Is it not always so, if there be enough of spiritual life within us to accept the truths which tell us what we are, and how far we are from what we should be?

I am not sure but an illustration of this may be found in diseases of the body. In some of the most dangerous, no symptom is more alarming than the ease of the patient, his freedom from pain and his unconsciousness of danger. After our late war, officers who had been familiar with battle-fields strewn with the wounded, told me that the surgeons gave their first attention, not to those who lay quiet with little suffering, but to those who made the most outcry, — not merely because they wished to relieve them who suffered most, but because it was those to whom they might hope to give effectual relief; for their suffering and their outcry indicated that the vital powers were not prostrate, — that reaction had set in, and life was struggling with death, and might conquer. Our

whole life is a spiritual battle-field; and is it not true here, also, that they who suffer most, and call most earnestly on the Physician of their souls, are most likely to live?

We read in the Revelation, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." But for such words as these, it might seem a hard thing to say that there may be some of those who are kind and gentle and observant of all the proprieties of life, and who win the good opinion of all who know them, and are at peace with themselves, who may yet be badly wounded and dangerously sick without knowing it, — wounded by the poisoned shafts of the enemies of their souls, and heart-sick with worldliness and selfishness; for our selfishness is none the less selfish because we love those who love us, and who are made a part of ourselves by ties of blood or friendship, or because we have learned how wise it is for this life to keep well with the world, and are not disturbed by violent passions, and are often prompted to relieve suffering by a natural and inherited unwillingness to see suffering. To such persons it is said, "Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you." For this verse, too, has its spiritual meaning; and it denounces a woe unto

us, when all that is within us speaks well to us of ourselves, and says unto us, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." The Lord sends no sword to them: He cannot, for they wear impenetrable armor.

It is impossible for the divine influence to flow into our minds without exciting conflict; for it is impossible that it should find us all that we should be, and equally impossible that it should not endeavor to make us what we should be; but let us look at the succeeding verses for the illustrations which they offer.

I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against the mother. — Matt. x. 35.

And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. — Matt. x. 36.

This, then, is the sword, this the battle which the Lord came to send. These verses refer to the household of the heart. Where men and women are mentioned together in the Scriptures, men refer to the intellectual parts of our nature, and women to the affectionate. If the truth which a man learns compels him to renounce the hereditary intellectual tendencies which came to him from his ancestry, through his father, then is the man set at variance against his father; and if his natural affections are rebuked and resisted by the new affections awaking

within him, then is the daughter against the mother. In verse 21, it is said, "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death." Whatever literal fulfilment of this prophecy may have taken place in the early days of the Christian Church, it has long since ceased; but the Word of God is eternal, the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. The truths it tells are for all men and all time; and the instruction these verses give is summed up in the statement that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Who does not know that this is so, if he has tried to enter in at the strait and narrow gate, and has labored to resist his proclivities to evil,—to banish thoughts of envy, of hatred, of impurity, of longing for that which should not be desired, to give up bad habits and renounce cherished sins and walk in the ways of life,—who that has been taught by such efforts and experiences as these does not know that his enemies are of his own household,—that they constitute the family of wrong propensities, wrong indulgences, wrong habits, and wrong desires, which are related to each other in various ways, and throng about him and meet him at every step? Who that has taken up his cross and striven to follow after his Lord has not found how painful is

the effort, how hard and constant the battle? Yes, from wakeful nights and troubled days of fear and sorrow, he has learned the awful meaning of the verse which soon follows, and to which all that I have cited are but an introduction.

He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. — Matt. x. 39.

This is a fearful saying. To lose one's life, voluntarily, by one's own efforts, which must be persistent and long-continued, — this may well seem as if we were bidden to inflict upon ourselves a slow and painful death. Our thoughts go forward, and see before them a very rugged path. We have, perhaps, already learned how hard it is to contend against our own propensities, strengthened perhaps by habitual indulgence. How can we resist and subdue the overmastering love of this world and its enjoyments? and, if we do give up all this, what is left for us but dulness and sadness? The prospect terrifies us. We are ready to say, too much is demanded. We cannot do it; we should be glad to be perfect if we could, but we must cease to aim so high; we must be content to be as good as other people, and avoid what seems like sin, and take what befalls us. We cannot give up our life.

When the children of Israel, who had escaped from Egypt, reached the southern extremity of the

promised land, they stopped there and sent forward men to explore what lay before them and report what they found. They went, and returned and reported that "they are strong who possess the land, and the cities walled and very great, — and there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, — and they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the Lord had given them." A few of these explorers were faithful and hopeful; and, while they did not deny the obstacles they must encounter, they told the people that it was "a goodly land flowing with milk and honey," and urged them to go up and possess it. But the people would not. They returned to the wilderness, and wandered and died there; and all died but the few who, with a full knowledge of what it would cost, were ready to go forward. They lived, and in the end led the hosts of Israel to take possession of their inheritance. So must it be with us. Those fearful thoughts, those feeble and fainting affections for the right, which dare not attack the cities in which our worldly and selfish loves have fenced themselves, nor the giant evils which stand in our way, all these must die. But, if the stronger and braver hopes survive, they will lead a new race of thoughts and affections to the battle-fields, where we know that we shall conquer if we obey our Lord's will,

and, if we conquer, shall win for ourselves heavenly homes.

We cannot hope to lose our natural and unregenerate life at once. With every victory over evil, we lose a part of this natural life, and somewhat of the new and promised life is given us. We cannot while we live here rise above the region of clouds into abiding and unbroken sunshine. Day and night, summer and winter, light and darkness, peace and conflict, will follow each other through the long journey from Egypt to the Holy Land. But in the days or hours, or it may be only moments, of light and peace, we may gather strength for the conflicts which will come, for we may have a foretaste of what awaits us when the warfare is ended, and the sun risen which will set no more.

Glad would he be, who has learned what this natural and unregenerate life is, to lose it. For nothing else does he pray so earnestly, strive so constantly. Well may we pray and strive for this; for, if we lose this life for His sake, what a life is given us in its stead. It is a life of peace and trust. We do not forget our sins; we do not make light of the impurities which clouded our past; but, when we remember them, we are sure that He has removed our iniquities from us, far as the west is from the east, and they will trouble us no more.

In their stead, our Father has given us from Himself purity and goodness, to be our own for evermore. Instead of the warfare that lies behind us, He has given us His peace. We have found our life.

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations ; and then shall the end come. — Matt. xxiv. 14.

Nor can the end of these sorrows and conflicts come, until this gospel is preached to all the world within us, and all the nations of natural thoughts and beliefs within us shall hear and receive its witness.

The light which falls on these merely natural thoughts and beliefs discloses their evil nature. Men see the abomination of desolation in their proneness to self-love and self-trust, and they see that it stands in the place which should be holy unto the Lord, — in the very inmost of their hearts. What can they do to be saved? Let them flee to the higher and holier states, the mountains of the spirit, to which He is striving to lead them. If they have gained any, even a lower elevation, if they stand on their house-tops, let them not go down into their old and lower states of faith or of affection to bear with them on their upward path those lower things. And if they are in the field, or in the goodness which is of faith (for the field by the

culture whereof all life is supported represents this vital goodness), let them not go back to a mere intellectual belief in doctrinals.

In that time, or state, of conflict and unrest, many false Christs, or false views of Christ, and false prophets, or teachers of these falsities, will strive to disturb and mislead. But let us hold firmly to Him who can sustain us, let Him be our Rock, let us refuse to hearken to the falsities of self-salvation and look only to Him, and the darkness of night will pass away. The light will come out from the east, and will shine unto the west. Let those who are willing to receive this light be patient, and in their patience hold fast their faith, and morning will come to them, and they will know what the Psalmist means when he says, "Cause me to hear Thy loving-kindness in the morning, for in Thee do I trust: cause me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto Thee." Yes, they trust in Him. They leave the carcass of their dead naturalism to the foul birds of prey which gather unto it.

How ignorant men are of their own states, of their own dangers, and of the dealings of divine love with them, by which, if it be possible, He would save them. As in the days of Noah, we go on our several ways of life, unconscious whither they lead us, until the flood comes. But the very

flood was merciful. It saved some, if it destroyed many. It searches in us for any thing of genuine good or truth which can be found there, and it saves that; and us by that. Two men shall be in the field: one shall be taken; the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill: one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Men here denote truths, women affections. Of the multitude of our thoughts and beliefs and affections, they which to our consciousness are alike, of the same character and doing the same work, may differ utterly from each other. Some, outwardly good enough to satisfy us, are tainted within by selfishness and impurity, and they are taken away, if we may be rescued from them; while others are so far governed by a spirit of true charity and of a genuine faith, that they can be saved and cleansed from the foulness which clings to them. And He who is able thus to discriminate between them and their opposites, and to save them, may save us by means of them.

Know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. — Matt. xxiv. 43.

How much of the working of Divine Providence in our behalf is done with utter unconsciousness on our part. At best, we know of it nearly nothing;

of how much, entirely nothing. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." And again: "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." A part of this at least we may understand, when we remember that the process of regeneration is a process of rending away from us our natural loves, the sources of all natural enjoyment, to which we cling as to our life. He that would take them away seems to us a thief who breaks into our house to rob us. How should we watch and resist, if we knew of His coming. But we do not know of this until the work is so far done, that we are willing to lose that natural life, and to co-operate with the saving influences which would take it away and give us in its stead a new and better life. We do this with pain and effort, and as one who fights with a deadly enemy. But it is then given us to discern that he is indeed our enemy, and we do fight with him. We are sustained in our conflict with our evil habits and passions, by seeing, even as the conflict goes on, that we are contending for our lives against the very powers of death and hell. And, if we conquer, we know who gave us strength for

the combat. And at last, when peace dawns on us, and its light falls upon the paths which we had trodden in darkness, with what inexpressible gratitude do we discover that our whole life has been as a tissue woven of special providences!

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. — Matt. xxx. 14.

The idea that our Lord sometimes leaves us and goes far from us frequently recurs in the Scriptures; and yet if He should leave us for an instant, in that instant we should perish: we should become nothing; for we are nothing unless at every instant He imparts being to us and fills us with His own life.

There is a difference between human giving and divine giving, between natural giving and spiritual giving. When a man gives, that which he gives goes from him altogether. He gives it to another; by the gift it ceases to be his, and becomes wholly the other's; for, if he retains any property or ownership in the thing given, by just so much is the gift incomplete. Not so when the Lord gives. He can give only from Himself and of Himself, for He is All in all. What He gives remains in Him and is His as much as before; for if it left Him altogether, it would perish. And yet He gives, and gives freely and wholly.

We may see a faint shadow of this truth, enough

to help us to some comprehension of it, in the difference between our natural giving of natural things and our spiritual giving of spiritual things. A man gives some article of property, — it may be land, money, a book, or watch: he gives it wholly. It ceases wholly to be his; and, from the moment that he gives it, it is no more his than if it never had been his. But, from what he has learnt of truth, he gives some portion of his knowledge to another. He gives it wholly. It is then the receiver's as much as it had been the giver's; but it remains the giver's as much as it was before the gift. Or, from the treasure of his good affections, he succeeds in imparting some portion to his brother. It is as if fire kindled materials ready for it into new fire. His brother may feel that affection with an intensity equal to his own. He has given much, but he has given nothing away from himself. Rather has he strengthened within himself and increased his own spiritual riches by imparting of them to another.

The Lord gives us of His own Life; He gives it to us to be wholly our own: but in no sense or measure or degree does it cease to be His. He gives it to us to be wholly our own, that we may be free, wholly free; and he makes this freedom actual and substantial, and not apparent only. We are free, perfectly free, by this gift of life to be our own; and yet we are and must ever remain perfectly and

inconceivably dependent upon Him. We should know that we are free; we may think and say that our life is our own, if only we guard against and utterly repel the falsity which would tell us that our life is our own in the natural or external sense of ownhood, or in any sense which weakens our conviction that our life is wholly and always from Him, and that we are perfectly dependent upon Him for being, for life, and for every thing which constitutes life.

Without our freedom, without our own choice of good of ourselves in our actual freedom, we can make no progress, no step in the way of regeneration. That we may be thus free, He sometimes seems to go far from us: He leaves us to ourselves. If we were good and wise enough, if we were as the angels, the sense of His presence would bring with it a sense of freedom; but we are not good enough. The constant sense of His presence would subject us to an overpowering influence. Willingly would He lead us into that state in which we rest all our freedom on the sense of His perpetual presence, and of His perpetual gift; for then we should be at peace, and should know what happiness really is; but we can advance towards that condition only step by step. We can take each step only in freedom, and in the consciousness of freedom; and that we may take each step in the freedom and the consciousness of

freedom, without which it cannot be taken, "it is expedient that He go away." Then, if in our freedom we take those steps aright; if we choose to serve Him and not self; if we use our freedom as He would that we should use it, but will not compel us to use it, for that compulsion would take our freedom away, — then the Comforter, His own Spirit, will come to us, and leave us no more; for, by the help which He has given us, we have built for Him, in our own hearts, a home in which He may dwell for ever.

VIII.

There were present at that time some who told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you nay, but, unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. — Luke xiii. 1-5.

Men cannot in the present condition of the human mind, if they believe at all in God and in providence, avoid regarding all calamity and suffering as punishment. In the olden time, this feeling was constantly avowed and acted upon. Whoever suffered from misfortune thought that he

had offended the gods and they had withdrawn their favor. And he used such means to recover it as his religion or his superstition suggested to him. Or, if he was in peril, he tried to make a bargain with God, promising some great thing if he were helped through his trouble. Jephthah's vow was an instance of this. Such things perpetually recur in history. Thus Clovis, the founder of the French monarchy, in much danger in a battle with the Germans, promised to be a Christian if the God of the Christians would give him the victory. He conquered, and became a Christian, at least in name, and was baptized; and carried his people with him. And is all this a thing of the past? By no means. It is an occurrence of every day for men to attribute some misfortune or calamity to the wrath of an offended God, against whom conscience tells them they have sinned. They seek to propitiate Him by the promise of a reformed life, or by the sacrifice of some habit or some possession dear to them; and they prepare to encounter some especial danger by similar means which they hope will secure to them divine favor. Perhaps no man's life is altogether free from such things, in some form or other.

But what is the truth respecting this matter? It is, that the Lord never can be propitiated, and never needs to be propitiated, because He is love,

always love to all. He never punishes, but His providence puts on that appearance to men, when He can in that way operate upon them, and cannot in a better and higher way for which they have neither eye nor heart. Nothing ever *happens* to any man, for there is no such thing as hap or chance. Every thing which ever occurs to any man occurs to him at that time, for the very reason that it is the best possible thing which could occur to him at that time. Man's own conduct is left to his freedom; and he may do what is bad for him, and very bad. But whatever comes to him from without, although it be in itself a very bad thing, is the best thing for such a man as he is then.

All occurrences are governed by Divine Providence. Men divide them into what agrees with their wishes, and these they call good fortune, or perhaps blessings; and what opposes their wishes, and these they call misfortunes or perhaps punishments. But nothing occurs to any man which is in the end a misfortune or a calamity, unless he makes it so; for nothing can occur to him that he may not make to be the blessing which it was intended to be, or make it to be a calamity by abusing and perverting it. It is ordered of Providence that painful consequences are frequently connected obviously with wrong-doing, because very frequently we can be deterred from or turned away from wrong-doing

only by the fear or sense of punishment. But sometimes painful events occur in apparently perfect independence of and in no connection with conduct, and these men call, according to their belief, accidental or providential. But, in truth, all events whatever, all equally and alike, are providential, and are made or permitted to occur only that they may help us to see and walk in the way of life, or, if they cannot do that, may check our wanderings therefrom.

Then said He, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? And whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard-seed which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. — Luke xiii. 18, 19.

How this comparison rebukes the idea of a sudden or immediate growth of the kingdom of God within us! The doctrine of instantaneous conversion, and that this conversion is a full and perfect justification, is an enormous error, which has wrought great mischief. But it would have wrought far more, had it not been tempered by its connected doctrine of gradual and successive sanctification. The whole doctrine, consisting of these two parts, presented itself to men's minds and operated in them according to the character and bent of those minds. They who clung to their natural condition, and resisted all true regeneration, looked

only to what they thought their instantaneous conversion. Of that they were sure. The rest would follow in time, nor was it much matter whether it did or not, for their salvation was at all events made certain. Cromwell on his death-bed asked the ministers who attended him whether the doctrine of "the perseverance of the saints" was certain. They assured him that it was. "Then," said he, "I am safe; for I know that I was once converted!" From this most dangerous illusion, they escape whose thoughts turn mainly to the sanctification which should follow conversion, and which must follow if it be real, and therefore affords a test by which they may know whether it be real.

In the corresponding passage in Matthew, the mustard-seed is said to be "the least of all seeds." The first germ of genuine goodness in the mind, the first affection which looks away from self to the Lord, may be so feeble, so small, that we know it not, or, if we know, soon forget it. But the Lord has planted it in the garden of the soul. He would not have done this, if there had not been some readiness in the soil to receive it. Thereafter, how wisely, how tenderly, do infinite wisdom and infinite love watch over it. Upon it the sunshine of heaven falls, the rain descends like truths which come to the thirsty soul as showers upon dry and thirsty ground, and soft and gentle suggestions and

emotions refresh it like the evening and the morning dew. Every thing is done which omnipotence can do to help; and nothing more. For the spiritual freedom of man is never impaired, never coerced. He must say whether this germ of life, the object of all this loving and watchful care, shall live and grow, or shall perish. It was a seed sown by the Lord Himself, and not by us; and the parable of the seeds which the sower sowed, of which some died and others lived, tells us whether this germ of life shall live or die.

The verses immediately following compare the kingdom of heaven to leaven which a woman took and mixed with three measures of meal. A woman mixes it, for she represents affection, and it is only through this that the regenerating influence can penetrate the whole mass. Love only has life and is life, for truth has only the life which loves gives it. Very small, even as small as the least of all seeds, may it be; but, if it lives with the life imparted to it by the desire to give up self and sin and grow in goodness, it will do its work, and, in this life or the other, affect the whole mass.

Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's. And He said unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's. — Luke xx. 24.

In many passages of the Word, as well in the Old as in the New Testament, entire devotion of

the soul to God is commanded. As we read them, it seems as if every thought, every affection, and every act which was not given up unreservedly to the love and worship of God was mistaken and wrong. Such passages need not be cited: they occur everywhere. The narrative concerning the tribute money, and the words of our Lord connected with it, are related in the first three Gospels, in a very similar way, though with some differences. On one point all agree. They who thus questioned Him "marvelled at His answer."

Even so it has always been. Asceticism has taken literally the command to give up all things else, and worship God by the sacrifice of all the interests, enjoyments, and relations of common life. And yet in these verses we are told to make a distinction: to give to God what belongs to God; but to give to Cæsar, to the world which was Cæsar's, all that belonged to Cæsar. The only way in which there has been an attempt to reconcile these two requirements is by a kind of compromise. Neither should be obeyed without regard to the other. Somewhere between them we should find a middle ground on which we could safely stand. But where this middle ground was men have not agreed. They have held every position between the two extremes: some having placed it so near the point of universal sacrifice as to leave but little

for the world ; while others, the very great majority, place it so near the point of self-indulgence as to leave very little tribute to be paid to God. Perhaps the best view that has been taken hitherto is that we are so made, so circumstanced, and placed in such relations and have such wants, that a reasonable amount of our time and labor and interest must be given to worldly matters, and that in doing so we only obey the will of God and do nothing in any sense wrong. And what say the principles of the New-Church to this question? They say no compromise is needed. Both requirements are true and real, and both in full and constant force.

The common duties, employments, and relations of life, with the innocent enjoyments which they and the world about us offer, are provided for us as means by which we may worship God, and strengthen and manifest our love to Him, and give ourselves up wholly to Him.

The love to God when it reaches down from the higher to the lower parts of our mind, and employs our bodily or mental forces in acts, is then in its fulness. It becomes the love of usefulness ; the love of being useful to all the children of our Father ; the love of rejoicing in this love as His gift, given to us as the means by which He may give to us all of His own happiness (which is the infinite blessedness of infinite usefulness) that we will permit Him to impart to us.

At first, while we are wholly natural, we are very far from any willingness to receive this happiness. And the vast majority of mankind remain so far from it that they are compelled to pass their lives in enforced usefulness, from which they cannot escape, however they may desire to. And they are compelled thus to live, because the acquirement of the habit of usefulness is the best thing that can be done for them.

But how much better is that which can be done for those who have learned to love their duties as the ways in which God has shown them how to serve Him! An approach is made to this state by those who go patiently through their hours of labor, looking hopefully to the hours of enjoyment which may follow, when, their tasks done, they may indulge themselves in a rest for which they are grateful, or perhaps in kind and benevolent offices towards their needing neighbors. But far nearer the state which the mercy of God makes possible for them, are they who in every hour of dutiful labor, distasteful or wearisome as it may be, rejoice that they are serving Him, that they are doing His work, in the work which He has provided for them to do for their neighbor. It is a favorite maxim of Swedenborg that the very highest charity is to do faithfully all the duties of our common employments and occupations. And when from their labors men

turn to the rest He gives them, or to the innocent pleasures in which He permits them to find refreshment and invigoration, there too they find other cause for loving Him, other means provided to strengthen their love for Him and for their neighbor. They give to Cæsar all that belongs to Cæsar. They give it willingly, gladly; for, while giving it to Cæsar, they give it to God also.

IX.

And there was also a strife among them which should be accounted the greatest. And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve. — Luke xxii. 24–26.

How many Christians have wondered that the disciples of the Lord, who had received His instructions and seen His example, could have fallen so low as this strife for greatness implies. But are any or were ever any so humble as not to know what this means? Often, he or she, who most retires from open strife for distinction, and who never utters an ambitious word, nourishes in a concealed corner of the mind a belief that, were justice done

to their merits, some excellence they dwell upon in the silence of consciousness would be acknowledged, and "an upper room" assigned to them.

Here, as everywhere else, that which is wrong is only the perversion of that which is right; for there neither is nor can be any evil which is not the abuse and the antagonism of some opposite good. We can easily see the good quality or disposition which by perversion becomes this strife for greatness. It is a desire, a zeal, for usefulness. Because likeness to God (god-like-ness, as it was once called, now called godliness) is the condition and the measure of all happiness, and God is infinitely, wholly, useful, or good in act, usefulness is the condition and the measure of all true human happiness. Therefore the Lord seeks to inspire a desire of usefulness into the hearts of all men. But when the inherited naturalness of men is not restrained or modified, in the degree in which it remains the hateful thing it is, good is perverted into its opposite, and the desire for usefulness into the desire for greatness. But this desire may be regenerated and restored to its original character; and when so regenerated it is capable of indefinite development, and may become the source of unbounded happiness.

The selfish love of greatness, however humble it may call and think itself, has a tendency to

indefinite enlargement. The old story of Alexander's weeping because he had no more worlds to conquer is but a symbol of a universal law. You may ask how can this be a universal law? How very few are conquerors! How few can achieve greatness in any way! Yes, this is so: thanks be to the mercy of our Father, few can incur the danger of greatness in outward position. But how is it in the mind and thought? That every one must answer for himself. But let him inquire into his own habitual imaginations; let him examine his castles in the air: they will tell him what he would be and what he would do, if he could be and do all he would. How many would find their thoughts running out into vagaries of great wealth or fame or high position or other distinction! The more such thoughts are indulged, the more they amplify themselves and the farther any limits to the wild imagination recede. Such vagaries acquire enormous power; they almost enslave the mind; and the records of our insane hospitals tell how many of the incurable patients have been brought there by an indulgence in such fantasies. It is this which has cast them bound and fettered into the hands of the devils who inspire their imaginations. Then the poor lunatics sit in their cells believing they are emperors or kings or high-priests or dispensers of unbounded wealth. Nor is it very rare for the

maniac who has thus become subject to infernal domination to believe and proclaim that he is Jesus Christ, or even God Himself.

Horrible is this picture: perhaps it is the most saddening scene which human life exhibits. But it is permitted to exist, or evil is permitted thus to exhibit itself outwardly and truly; and we are permitted to see it, that we may draw from it lessons which all of us need.

They may be many. I will speak, however, only of two. One is, that while it is still in our power we may curb these imaginations. If at first they are only idle and seem merely wasteful of time and thought, even then they are mischievous, and enfeeble and distort the character. And soon and very easily they grow worse, and by indulgence constantly worse, until they may end in the terrible destruction above portrayed.

The second lesson is this: We may now better understand the mercy of God in the discipline of humiliation which visits all. There may be a very few who go on from step to step ever seemingly successful: of them we must believe that Divine Providence sees that the best hope of their renouncing their ambition lies in discovering the worthlessness of success. And we may think of the emperors and kings who have abdicated their sovereignty, finding its burdens and its chains more than they

can bear. And if we see long success ended by sudden and utter failure, knowing that this too was providential, we may hope that even such an one as he who died on the rocky island of St. Helena may have learned in his fall a lesson worth infinitely more than the greatness that he won or the greater greatness that he dreamed of. These, however, are very exceptional cases. They may serve to illustrate a rule, but not to exhibit that rule in its common application. For that we must go to ourselves and to common life. There we see perpetual disappointments. If we succeed in this plan or in that, our success is but partial, and it alternates with defeat. How few of us can point to a single day in which every thing from the beginning to the end went on precisely as we wished. And yet all these disappointments, all the obstructions and impediments which make the path of life difficult and laborious, all these are permitted for a purpose. And that purpose, at least in part, is to wean us from our selfish wishes, to weaken our worldliness, and to prevent it from growing by indulgence and success into invincible strength.

So much as this the Lord can do for us, and does for all of us. Our external freedom he controls as may be best for us. And all that may be done to weaken our eager desire for wealth and position by cutting off indulgence and by compelling constant

labor for necessary or moderate results, and occupying our minds so that idle vagaries may not be nursed into insanity, all this is done. But, let us remember, all this is only *negative* assistance, so to call it; only that which the Lord can do for us without our co-operation and against our wills. In this way the enemies of our souls are so far restrained as to leave us in freedom. But if more is to be done, if a *positive* advance is to be made, this must be done by us in our freedom; by us, in willing acceptance of the farther aid which our Father is ready to give us, in willing co-operation with Divine Providence. But for His watchful mercy, but for that discipline of defeat and disappointment which is so irksome and painful to us and clouds our days and disturbs our nights and makes life wearisome, we should not have this freedom, for our enemies would be too strong for us.

Let me dwell somewhat upon a distinction which is of the utmost importance. It is that between the methods of action of Divine Providence as to the externals of life and as to the internals of life. There is no moment and no event of external life which is not controlled by Providence; and every event is controlled and directed for our internal, or spiritual, or eternal good. But it is so controlled and directed as not to *make* it a blessing, but that it may become a blessing; and whether it shall

become a blessing depends upon ourselves. Disappointments and calamities are never in themselves blessings; but they always may become so. The failure of our plans, poverty, sickness, pain, the loss of friends, and all other sorrows, are permitted, that they may weaken or suppress our tendencies to selfishness, worldliness, and impurity. For these tendencies admit to our souls our spiritual enemies, and give these enemies power over us. If their power be not restrained or lessened, we could not resist them, and should be lost. But their power is restrained and lessened by the calamities and disappointments we suffer under and deplore. Because their power is thus weakened, we are able to resist them; and it is so weakened that we may be able to resist them. This the Lord can do, in accordance with His own divine order. But while our external freedom is constantly controlled, our internal freedom is never controlled. We cannot have good, we cannot be good, unless we choose good in freedom. The reason is that the choice of good in freedom is the highest attainable happiness a created being can enjoy. Infinite love would give to man this highest attainable happiness. Therefore it is that Providence always seeks to secure to every one that freedom which makes that happiness possible. Therefore all that befalls us in life is intended to preserve and strengthen that freedom.

And then comes the great and final question, what use will we make of that freedom. We may, if we will, make all the working of Divine Providence useless and ineffectual by still adhering to the enemies from whom it had been made possible for us to escape. We may refuse to escape from them; we may deliver ourselves up to them. If we choose to do this, we are not prevented. Then our disappointments and sufferings are indeed not blessings but calamities, for we have made them so. But if we profit by the freedom thus given to us; if we resist the enemies of our souls and all their evil influences which are thus weakened that we may resist them; if in our freedom, and when the storm has blown over and quiet comes again and ease, if then we turn from our enemies and refuse to permit them to acquire new power over us, then those things which came to us as calamities are blessings indeed, and the day will come when we shall look to our Father with inexpressible gratitude for the wise and tender mercy which permitted them.

In this passage in Luke, our Lord commands His disciples to put away ambition: "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serveth." But at the close He promises that they shall "sit on thrones governing the twelve tribes of Israel." In a corresponding

passage in Matthew, He says, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister [servant]; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." In both of these passages, greatness seems to be promised as the reward of self-humiliation; and we are told to humble ourselves, because by doing so we shall become great.

Is this a proper object for him who would humble himself to set before himself? Here, as often elsewhere, the literal sense of Scripture addresses itself to the lowest principles and motives of conduct. And the reason is, that man can ascend from the bottom only step by step, and the first step which he can take is that nearest to him. That he may take this step, the conviction is brought to his mind that, if he will renounce this base, external worldliness, he may hope for his reward in a higher and better distinction. Let him take this step, let him take it from a desire to obey God and live according to His commandments, and something is gained. He has become ready to take the next step; to see that in keeping the commandments there may be a reward for keeping them, and he will understand the saying, "in keeping of them there is great reward;" and he will begin to know that the greatness he should seek is a greater usefulness,—is greatness for others, and not for himself. He may refuse to enter upon this path. If he enters

upon it, he may stop where he will; for while the Lord willingly helps him if it be but one step upwards, He always leaves him in his spiritual freedom. He goes with the man who is seeking to ascend to Him, guiding and assisting every willing step. And whither does this path lead? Even to heaven; even to the heights of heaven. For the highest in heaven are the humblest. They know best that they exist only by His constant gift of His own life, and that whatsoever of goodness or of truth or of strength they possess is His in them.

This then is true humility; this is the humility of the angels. It is to know certainly and feel constantly that we are nothing, — simply mere nothingness: except as He gives us to think, to feel, to act, to be; but that, if only we will accept it, He will give us the power of ascending to angelic greatness, and that is angelic goodness. Holding firmly these central truths, we may rejoice in all that He gives us to be, and find happiness in our grateful acknowledgment of His constant watchfulness and infinite goodness.

It is very difficult to obtain even a general idea of heavenly happiness, or of the grounds on which it rests. All there is in us of mere naturalism rises up like a thick cloud before the mental eye whenever that eye is turned towards heaven. But it is now within the power of man to learn something of life in heaven.

God is there. Life in Himself; essential love and wisdom in Himself; ever pouring forth life, love, and wisdom from Himself into all His creatures, to be received by each one according to the inmost nature of each. Angels are happy because they have, by the strength given them and the help rendered them, subjugated the selfishness and worldliness which would have perverted this inflowing life into selfishness and worldliness. If these prevail in the character, this inflowing good must be perverted. If they reign, divine love, which is love of others, is perverted into its opposite, which is self-love; and then there must be "a strife for greatness," and this is the opposite of heaven. Where those degrading and destroying proclivities do not prevail, because they have been resisted and overcome, then the divine love of others is received without perversion, and becomes a human love of others.

In the Lord Himself, His infinite love for others, infinitely active in creating and preserving the universe, causes His own infinite blessedness. That blessedness belongs to the divine life, and goes with it, and is received where that is received; and exists in the measure in which it is received and not perverted into selfishness and worldliness. These evils suffocate this happiness, and cannot do otherwise. And therefore it is the constant purpose of the Lord, to which His infinite power is devoted, to enable

men, in their freedom, to resist, and conquer, and cast out this devil of selfishness. For only so can it be cast out.

Angels are blessed because they are His instruments, the more blessed the more entirely they are His instruments; but they are not dead instruments; not the playthings of His omnipotence; not the mere channels through which His life flows forth to form and fill the universe. His infinite love has given to them His life to be their own. To satisfy His infinite desire to make them happy He gives to them His life to be their own, that so they may be themselves. For His life, with its freedom, its going forth into usefulness, and all the elements which constitute it a divine life, goes by his gift to them, to become in them human life, and to be whatsoever they make it to be in their freedom.

[NOTE.—A large part of this paper was printed in the New-Church Magazine.]

THE CHERUBIM.

WHEN Adam and Eve fell by disobedience, they became unfit for paradise, and were therefore expelled from it. "And He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Swedenborg informs us "that cherubim denote the Providence of the Lord, lest man should insanely enter into the mysteries of faith from the proprium (his selfhood), and thus profane them;" he also says that this "is demonstrated by all the passages in the Word where cherubim are mentioned." The most striking of these passages is that in Exodus, in which Moses is taught how to construct the tabernacle and its contents. "Thou shalt make two cherubim of gold. . . . And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings. . . . And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark."

We may understand the cherubim as denoting the preventive providence of the Lord, or this *pro-*

tective providence by *prevention*. Wheresoever we meet with cherubim in the Scriptures, what is said of them will illustrate this representation and significance. Of their form we know nothing with certainty. The prophet Ezekiel describes them as having four faces, to indicate their looking every way. "And their whole body, and their backs and their hands and their wings, were full of eyes round about," to indicate the infinite watchfulness of this preventive Providence.

There is nothing more mysterious to every thinking man than this preventive providence of the Lord. In the Holy of Holies, or the inmost of the tabernacle, the cherubim stood over the mercy-seat, and the mercy-seat was upon the ark. The ark contained the commandments written upon stone by the finger of God. These commandments contain or rather consist of the very essence of the Word or of divine truth. Above them was placed the mercy-seat, because they are the very crown of the divine mercy; and it is by means of them that divine mercy leads men to salvation and heaven. But, over the mercy-seat and ark, these guardian cherubim spread their protecting wings. We may readily infer that it is of the divine mercy that men are protected from the truth, or that so little spiritual truth is revealed to men, and that it is revealed so slowly and so dimly.

Why is this? What can man need more than the truth? He lives on earth, groping his way and stumbling in the darkness. The little that is revealed to us, compared with the darkness of utter ignorance, seems like a noon-day sun. But, when we compare it with the infinite treasures which the light we have indicates, but does not reveal, it then seems to us little more than nothing. Why is not more given to us? why is it not given to us more clearly?

There is sensuous truth, scientific truth, moral truth, and spiritual truth. If sensuous truth is presented to us, and the organs of sense are active and healthy, it cannot but be perceived. If scientific truth, as that of geometry, is presented to a mind educated and prepared for its perception, it cannot but be perceived. It is far otherwise with moral, and still more so with spiritual, truth. Here the character must be prepared for it; for the state of the will and the affections has a great and indeed a determining power over our perception of truths of this kind. Moral or spiritual truths are incapable of sensuous or scientific demonstration. It must be obvious that if a truth of this kind be presented to us, which is entirely antagonistic to our will and our affections and our whole habit of feeling, it would not be perceived, or, if perceived at all, it would be seen very dimly and inaccurately.

This would be more than useless. If it were rejected wholly, the mind would be darkened, and the possible perception of it, when a better state should come, would be lessened and impaired. If it were perceived at all, but wrongfully, it would be gradually distorted and changed into greater error. It is from these mischiefs that He who always knows precisely the state of our wills and affections guards us by that protective prevention which is denoted by the cherubim.

The word is the Hebrew plural of cherub, but its use by the translators of the Bible has made it an English word. The cherubim were two: one of the two denotes the divine protective prevention as to truth; the other denotes the same merciful prevention as to good. If it be true that the wind could whisper or proclaim God's truth, and all the voices of nature declare it unceasingly if this were His will, it is no less true that, were it His pleasure, none but angels should draw near to us, and no influences but those from heaven reach us. And then it would be impossible for us to be other than good; then it would seem that we must be only good, and wholly good. On the contrary, then we could not be good at all; not good by our own free choice of good; not good by the voluntary appropriation of good. For that can be ours only by our own choice of good in freedom.

How difficult it is to understand this truth clearly and to see it constantly! But when we do so understand it, and when we understand what true human good is, we have the key to the mystery of the divine preventions. If all truth were revealed to us, and nothing but good were possible to us, it would, as has been already said, seem as if we must be perfectly wise and good. But, in truth, it would then be impossible for us to be good with true human goodness; for that can be nothing else but divine goodness made human by free and voluntary choice and self-appropriation. Not for a moment must we lose sight of the distinction: the self-origination of goodness by man is utterly impossible, but the self-appropriation of the divine goodness is that for which he is created and lives in heaven for ever more. This word "appropriate" occurs often in the writings of Swedenborg. It is the English form of the Latin word *approprio*, which is formed from *ad* and *proprio*, and means *to add to the proprium*. Swedenborg defines it thus, in Divine Providence, No. 78:—

"By being appropriated to man is meant to enter into his life and become of his life; consequently to become his own."

Without so large a supposition as the entire exemption of man from falsity or evil, let us consider how the divine prevention denoted by the

cherubim operates in our daily life. The law of its operation is easily stated. It guards us from truth for which we are wholly unready, and which, therefore, we should be sure to pervert or profane; and it guards us from influences which would bring to us a goodness so far beyond us that we are not yet capable of making it our own by free self-appropriation, and which, if for the moment we yielded to it, we should afterwards renounce and abandon.

This has been the law of prevention, or the method by which the divine mercy has shown itself in prevention, from the first beginning of human life on earth; always, to every race, every church, every generation, and every individual. Always, a wisdom which could not err has been exerted to give to man all the truth and all the good which he could receive aright, and to guard him from truth and good which he could not possibly receive aright. The truth and the good which he could receive aright, he could also, in his freedom, reject or abuse. But, if he did so, this would be his doing, not the Lord's. If he received truth and good which he could not receive aright, but *must* reject or abuse, this would not be his doing, but the Lord's; and, therefore, this is something which never takes place.

Man can receive aright only such truth as he can love; and, therefore, it is provided that he cannot

receive, at all, truth which he cannot love. Hence it is that there never has been, and is not now, any spiritual truth revealed which is not so revealed that any man can reject and disbelieve it, who prefers to do so. And whether he desires to receive or to reject it, depends upon his character.

Whatever of goodness or of truth is given to us is wholly of the Lord's giving; but the reception of it is our own work, done by us with the strength which is given to us, if we from the heart desire to have it.

This mingling of the Lord's work and our work in our salvation, referring to Him His exclusive share, and acknowledging that which He has appointed to us as our share, presents to thinking minds a difficult question. This question is, What are we to do of and for ourselves, and what are we to leave to the Lord to do in us and for us of Himself alone? We are not without much instruction on this subject, in the Word.

Thus, in the Gospel of John, after the last supper, the Lord washed His disciples' feet, and declared that if He did not wash them they had no part with Him. Peter then "saith unto Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet; but is clean every whit."

Few of the words of our Lord have been the subject of more comment and inquiry, and as to none have all comment and inquiry been more useless. What, indeed, can be the purpose or the meaning of telling the disciples, and through them the church, that a man need only wash his feet, and, if he does, he is clean everywhere.

It is impossible to answer this question except by the science which reveals the correspondence between natural things and spiritual things, between the body and the soul; but this science gives at once a clear and explicit answer. It tells us that the feet are the lowest parts of the body, and that by means of them the man comes in contact with the earth, and stands upon the earth, and walks upon the earth, and moves among his neighbors. They denote, therefore, and mean the externals of the soul and mind, or of the life and character; acts and habits and thoughts and affections, by which man comes in contact with earthly, external life, and with the persons and things around him, and thinks and cares about them. Here we have the explanation of these strange words. Man's external conduct is put into his own hands. He is conscious of it, and controls it; and he makes it what his ruling loves would have it to be. In that external conduct, he either yields to the seductions of evil spirits and permits them to make it foul with

their own defilements, or he accepts the assistance of the angels who would gladly help him, and with that help washes its stains away, and makes and keeps his conduct clean every whit. It is the Lord who washes him, but man does this of himself; because he has strength and aid given him, which enable him to do it of himself. This is all that he can do; but this he is commanded to do, and this he must do if he would obey the commandments. Who, then, is it that cleanses the internals of his heart and soul,—those internals which make him what he really is, and what he is permanently. Let us ask this question, too, of the same law of correspondence.

Swedenborg answers this question most instructively, in Sections 175 to 190, and 296, of his work on the Divine Providence. He considers what is necessary to sustain and continue our natural and physical life; and what is thus necessary, he divides into what a man can do and must do, and what a man cannot do, and can have no connection with the doing of it.

Man's bodily life is sustained and preserved by the food that he eats. This food he can see, smell, taste, and choose, can put into his mouth, can masticate, and then swallow; but after that he can do no more. He loses sight of it and knowledge of it. Then life, the unconscious life of the body, does the rest. This Swedenborg sums up thus:—

The soul's secret workings, of which the man knows nothing because he has no sense of them, are these: the stomach rolls about the food received, opens and separates it by means of solvents; that is, digests it, offers fitting portions of it to the little mouths there opening which drink them in,—sends some to the blood, some to the lymphatic vessels, some to the lacteal vessels of the mesentery, and some down to the intestines; finally, the chyle conveyed through the thoracic duct from its receptacle in the mesentery is carried into the *vena cava*, and so into the heart, and from the heart into the lungs, and thence through the heart's left ventricle into the aorta, and from this by its branches to the viscera of the whole body and also to the kidneys, in every one of which organs there is effected a separation of the blood, a purification, and a withdrawal of heterogeneous substances.

Of all this man knows nothing by his senses. Science with its microscope and knife pursues the food through all its wandering; but the most learned scientist knows no more than an ignorant savage of the inmost processes by which the result is effected. He has learnt much of *what* the soul does, but is utterly ignorant of *how* the soul does this. Nor can science impart to man the slightest power over those internal workings of life. Of the divine mercy it is that he is thus ignorant and powerless. Were he conscious of them, and still more if he took part in them, he would obstruct, retard, and impair them. It is a familiar saying, that when the digestion is perfect a man does not know that he has a stomach. So it is with the beating of the heart, and in large measure with the

movement of the lungs. The sickly and nervous man thinks about these vital actions and dwells upon them, and as far as he does so interferes with and obstructs them. It is wise, therefore, to let them alone. But it is wise to do this with the knowledge that the Lord, with an inconceivable wisdom and an equal love, does all for man which he cannot do for himself; and that man cannot do this for himself, because it is best that he should not. Not also so, but the wise man will know, and the good man will thankfully acknowledge, that man can do that part of his work which it is given to him to do: he can get and eat his food only by using the means provided for him and by the life given to him. The power of the bodily organs to do the interior work of which the man is not conscious, and the power of other organs to do the more external work of which he is conscious and in which he takes a voluntary part, are equally and entirely the effect and action of the life flowing into him from the Divine Source of Life.

The body corresponds to the soul, and is one with it by correspondence. Together they make the man. This correspondence is perfect, for otherwise he could not live; and he dies when this correspondence becomes imperfect or obstructed. And whatever is true of the body materially and physically is true of the soul spiritually. If man

refuses to do his part of the work, or to eat the food provided for him, he will surely die. If he do not that part of the work of his regeneration provided for him, he will just as surely die spiritually. The part which he has to do is to keep his external life washed and clean. Then, and then only, the Lord, with an inconceivable wisdom and equal love, will provide for his spiritual life, health, and growth.

The most vital and essential part of this work is utterly withdrawn from our sense and consciousness. Have we not here drawn near to a solution of the problem with which they who are striving to walk in the way of regeneration are apt to be familiar? and that is, the alternation of days bright in the sunshine of His presence, with night in which He seems to have withdrawn from us, not only out of our sight and reach, but so far away that it is difficult to believe the day of His presence will ever come again.

Concerning the recurrence and alternation of these states, the Word has much to say. Thus the parable of the wicked husbandmen begins, in Matthew and in Mark: "A certain householder planted a vineyard, and went into a far country;" in Luke, "*went into a far country for a long time.*" By the vineyard is, of course, meant the church; and it means the church on the largest scale, and

on the smallest, or in each individual. Why does He who plants this vineyard go away to a far country, and it may be for a long time? Why does He not stay with the vineyard He has planted, and take care of it?

In Luke is narrated the cure of the man from whom a legion of devils was driven out. "Now the man out of whom the devils were departed *besought Him that he might be with Him*; but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God has done unto thee."

Many are they whose own experience might enable them to comprehend this. Devils have been cast out of them. They have at length resisted the evil influences which had assailed them often, perhaps conquered them often. They had fought out the fight, and in their turn conquered, and the devils had fled. But wofully have they learned their own weakness. Of nothing are they more sure than that without His help they would have fallen again, and perhaps lain for ever where they fell. How earnestly, as if asking for their very lives, they beseech Him to remain with them! But no: they must return to their own house! He has done His part of the work, and they must do theirs. And, that they may do this, they must "return to their own house;" to their own freedom,

in which they act of themselves, with the life and strength given them to be their own. There He bids them "shew how great things God has done for them;" not tell of it or talk of it, but *shew* it; shew it by the change in their life, by their utter renunciation of the evils which had beset them; living a new life externally, because He by their repentance and reformation had been able to give them a new life internally.

By far the most weighty passage of Scripture bearing upon this subject is that wherein our Lord speaks of the Comforter: "It is expedient that I go away; for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, cannot come unto us, excepting so far as we are ready and willing to receive Him. We cannot be ready to receive Him except so far as we have put away, *in our own freedom*, that sinfulness and selfishness which is the obstacle to His coming, and which He comes to complete and establish our victory over. We must open the door at which He is ever knocking; we must make ready for Him, and we can do this only in our freedom. But we should not be in freedom: we should not act of ourselves, of our own choice and in our own will, unless He "went away." While we live on earth, we are not able to act in freedom, if we act with a consciousness of His immediate presence. It would be an overpowering consciousness.

If any one will ask himself what he should be and how he should feel if his mind was never without the sense of a present Omnipotence, watching every act and perceiving every thought, he will see that he could not then act of himself and in perfect freedom. Therefore the Lord takes this sense of His presence away. He planted the vineyard, and His sun and rain and dew make it fruitful. He prepares our minds to act of ourselves and choose good rather than evil in our own freedom, and is ever present to guide and strengthen us, and aid us in every way which does not impair our spiritual freedom. But that is preserved, for only in our freedom can we "work out our salvation, because He worketh within us." If He did not work within us, we should have no life, no hope, no salvation. But He *so* worketh within us that we may work out our salvation; and, because we *may*, we *must*.

All that has been said in this paper refers to the doctrine of Proprium. This word is new as an English word. It is the Latin word which Swedenborg uses, retained in our translations because there is no English word which exactly represents it. There is no such English word; because words are made by those who use them to be the expression of the thoughts they have. All know how many new technical words modern arts and machines require, and

have introduced. So it is with new thoughts. The idea which *Proprium* expresses has never existed in English thought; and has, therefore, no representative among English words. It is the neuter of a Latin noun, meaning emphatically *own*; and the English words which most nearly approach it are "ownhood" or "selfhood." It may best be understood from the doctrine concerning *proprium*. That doctrine is, that human life is divine life flowing into man from the Divine Source of Life, and that it is given to him *to be his own*. Not only was this doctrine, and the idea of *proprium* or ownhood on which it rests, unknown to English thought, but it has never been intimated or indicated or suggested by any previous system of philosophy or religion. It is easy to state it as above; nor is it difficult to understand it in a general way. But it is to the last degree difficult to understand it fully, and to follow it accurately into its details and its consequences.

If we could so understand it, we should have a solution of the three great difficulties which have oppressed human thought from the beginning of thought. These are, first, to reconcile the freedom of man with the Omnipotence of God; second, to reconcile the misery of the world with the goodness of God; the third, to account for the origin of evil. Upon these great problems thoughtful minds have

labored in vain, and the most thoughtful have declared them to be insoluble. It must seem a strange and bold assertion, when it is said that in this age a solution of these problems has come down to earth from heaven. It is not meant that they now stand perfectly clear before any human mind; but that, in proportion as we comprehend the doctrine of Proprium, we see the light which it casts upon these problems, and are justified in the hope that it will solve them perfectly.

This doctrine reconciles the freedom of man with the Omnipotence of God, by showing that freedom belongs to the divine life, which flowing into man becomes in him human life, and is at once the foundation and the condition of all blessing, and that Omnipotence restrains its own exercise whenever this is necessary to the preservation of this freedom.

It reconciles the goodness of God with the misery of the world, by showing that this freedom is most actual and most real, and therefore liable to abuse, because, if it *could* not be abused, it would not be freedom.

It accounts for the origin of evil, by showing that man has abused this freedom, and thereby degraded himself, and that the external universe which is made for man, and therefore perfectly corresponds with him, shares in and suffers with him from this abuse and degradation.

We must look to Swedenborg for all our knowledge of this doctrine. And, if I mistake not, we shall find a variance between his earlier and his latest writings, not so much in his view of the subject as in his way of expressing that view; a variance which indicates a growth in his mind concerning it. From his earliest writings throughout, he speaks of man as always living in the appearance that he lives *from* himself; and that this appearance is never withdrawn from him, because it is necessary to his full consciousness of selfhood or manhood; but that it is never more than an appearance. As far as I know, he never, in any work, varies from this statement in any way. But, while it is a certain conclusion from all that he says that man lives *only* from God, I hold it to be also an equal conclusion from all that he says that this divine life is so given to man that he lives *of himself*. This distinction may seem obscure: what is meant by it is that man lives only because divine life flows into him, and therefore he lives only *from* God; but that it does not flow *through* him as a mere channel; it flows *into* him and abides in him, constituting his life, making him a man living his own life, giving him *proprium*, or ownhood or selfhood, and because of this ownhood man acts *of himself*.

In his earlier works, Swedenborg generally, if not always, says that man acts "*sicut a se*," or "as

if of himself." This word "sicut," usually translated "as if," is often translated by "as;" but this word then means "as if." Mainly from this way of putting it, an opinion has grown up in the church that Swedenborg presents the truth that man lives *from* God, as a statement of a fact; while it is an appearance only that man lives and acts *of* himself. That it is only an appearance that he lives *from* himself, and not from God, is constantly asserted by Swedenborg, and always true. And his earlier use of the word "sicut," "as if," in connection with the statement that he lives of himself, was perhaps necessary, lest man should forget that he lives only *from* God. But, in his latest work, we have the words of his ripest wisdom; and there he says that man lives "a se" or "ex se," "from himself," the qualifying word "sicut," "as if," being dropped. We usually translate *a* by *of* and *ex* by *from*, but he seems to have used these words indiscriminately.

Thus there is in the Apocalypse Revealed, n. 463, a relation in which Swedenborg says to certain spirits, "Does not the Lord say, 'Abide in me, and I in you; I am the vine, and ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me ye cannot do any thing.' Is not this fruit the good works which the Lord does through man, and the man does those things as if from himself? (*homo illa sicut*

a se).” In the True Christian Religion, the same relation is repeated, except that, instead of the Latin words above quoted, we find “homo ex se a domino,” “man (does the works) from himself, of the Lord.” So, if we compare n. 875, Apocalypse Revealed, with n. 461, True Christian Religion, we find “through me *as if* of myself,” changed into “from me of the Lord.”

So in n. 484, Apocalypse Revealed, we find, “Wherefore, my friend, believe that in the things of faith man operates as if of himself.” But, in the same relation in the True Christian Religion, we find this changed into “operates from himself, of the Lord.”

So, also, in n. 417, Apocalypse Revealed, we find, “Look to the Lord; and He will lead you, and will do good; He will do it through you, and you will do it, *as if* of yourselves.” But in the same relation, in n. 506, True Christian Religion, we find this changed into “you will do this from yourselves of the Lord.”

There is more than this. The instances above cited of a change in Swedenborg’s expression of this truth might, to those so habituated to his earlier phraseology that they would not willingly depart from it, seem unimportant, and be attributed to inadvertence, or in some way overlooked; but there is another instance which can be neither overlooked

nor disregarded; nor can its significance be denied or questioned.

In the last relation in the Apocalypse Revealed, n. 962, he says, in a passage which I give in the original Latin, at length:—

“Affulsit lux e cælo, ex qua viderunt quod Sanctum Divinum, quod intelligitur per Spiritum Sanctum, *procedat ex divino in Domino, per ipsius humanum glorificatum, quod est Divinum Humanum, comparative sicut omne activum procedit ex anima per corpus apud hominem.*” “Light shone on them from heaven, from which they saw that the Holy Divine, which is understood by the Holy Spirit, proceeds from the divine in the Lord through his glorified human, which is the Divine Human, comparatively as all activity proceeds from the soul through the body in man.”

In the True Christian Religion, n. 188, we find the same relation. The passage above quoted in Latin is the same as in the Apocalypse Revealed, as far as the italics; but the words in italics are changed into the following:—

“*Non* procedat ex patre per Dominum, sed ex Domino a patre, comparative sicut apud hominem, ejus activum *non* procedit ab anima per corpus, sed ex corpore ab anima.”

(The Holy Spirit) “does *not* proceed from the Father through the Lord, but from the Lord *of* the

Father, comparatively as with man his activity does *not* proceed from the soul through the body, but *from* the body, of the *soul*."

What can be more certain than that here is an important change in his statement? And that Swedenborg deemed it so important, that he was not content with making the change, but thought it fitting to declare distinctly and emphatically that he was not satisfied with the former expression; and he clothed the truth in the new expression, that he might express his views accurately.

We will not pursue this abstruse topic any farther in this paper; contented, if we suggest to those who wish to examine the subject the right line of investigation.

Our purpose is accomplished, if we have shown that Swedenborg does not present the truth that we live and act always and only from the Lord, as a truth and a fact; while he presents the other truth, that we live and act of ourselves only as an appearance, "a permitted illusion," as it has been called in the church. But that he presents this also as a truth and a fact; that he presents these two facts as forming one fact, and that the central Fact of Existence.

VALUABLE RELIGIOUS WORKS

PUBLISHED BY

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO., PHILADELPHIA.

* * For sale by Booksellers generally, or will be sent by mail, postpaid, to any address, on receipt of the price by the Publishers.

The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem Concerning
Charity. From the Posthumous Works of EMANUEL SWEDEN-
BORG, Servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. Translated from the
Latin. Paper, pp. 43, 15 cents.

On the Intercourse between the Soul and the
Body. By EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

True Christian Religion. By Emanuel Sweden-
BORG. 1 vol. 8vo. Cloth, \$2.25.

Conjugal Love. By Emanuel Swedenborg.
1 vol. 8vo. Cloth, \$1.75.

Doctrine Respecting the Sacred Scripture. By
EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. 12mo. Paper, 20 cents.

Doctrine Respecting Life. By Emanuel Sweden-
BORG. 12mo. Paper, 15 cents.

The Liturgy, with Consecutive Service. 12mo.
Cloth, \$1.25.

The Liturgy, without Consecutive Service.
12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

The Consecutive Service. 12mo. Cloth, limp,
50 cents.

Father, comparatively as with man his activity does *not* proceed from the soul through the body, but *from* the body, of the *soul*."

What can be more certain than that here is an important change in his statement? And that Swedenborg deemed it so important, that he was not content with making the change, but thought it fitting to declare distinctly and emphatically that he was not satisfied with the former expression; and he clothed the truth in the new expression, that he might express his views accurately.

We will not pursue this abstruse topic any farther in this paper; contented, if we suggest to those who wish to examine the subject the right line of investigation.

Our purpose is accomplished, if we have shown that Swedenborg does not present the truth that we live and act always and only from the Lord, as a truth and a fact; while he presents the other truth, that we live and act of ourselves only as an appearance, "a permitted illusion," as it has been called in the church. But that he presents this also as a truth and a fact; that he presents these two facts as forming one fact, and that the central Fact of Existence.

VALUABLE RELIGIOUS WORKS

PUBLISHED BY

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO., PHILADELPHIA.

* * For sale by Booksellers generally, or will be sent by mail, postpaid, to any address, on receipt of the price by the Publishers.

The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem Concerning
Charity. From the Posthumous Works of EMANUEL SWEDEN-
BORG, Servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. Translated from the
Latin. Paper, pp. 43, 15 cents.

On the Intercourse between the Soul and the
Body. By EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

True Christian Religion. By Emanuel Sweden-
BORG. 1 vol. 8vo. Cloth, \$2.25.

Conjugal Love. By Emanuel Swedenborg.
1 vol. 8vo. Cloth, \$1.75.

Doctrine Respecting the Sacred Scripture. By
EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. 12mo. Paper, 20 cents.

Doctrine Respecting Life. By Emanuel Sweden-
BORG. 12mo. Paper, 15 cents.

The Liturgy, with Consecutive Service. 12mo.
Cloth, \$1.25.

The Liturgy, without Consecutive Service.
12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

The Consecutive Service. 12mo. Cloth, limp,
50 cents.

Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Provi-

dence. By EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. Originally published in Latin at Amsterdam in 1764. 12mo. Cloth. 387 pp. \$1.25.

"The 'Divine Providence' of Swedenborg is laid before the students of that celebrated mystic in a clear, neat, and engaging form, through the edition of J. B. Lippincott & Co., of this city. This new translation is by R. Norman Foster, from the original Latin of Swedenborg, as edited by Dr. J. F. I. Tafel. The volume is a fine, large 8vo, printed with the utmost beauty of 'Lippincott's Press'

upon a handsome quality of cream-laid, tinted paper."—*Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*.

" . . . This work has a standing among the productions of Swedenborg second to none that he wrote, and is recognized by his admirers as one of the most valuable among his many contributions to religious science and philosophy."—*St. Louis Republican*.

The Divine Attributes. Including also the Divine

Trinity. A Treatise on the Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, and Correspondence. From the "Apocalypse Explained" of Emanuel Swedenborg. 12mo. Extra cloth. \$2.00.

"The followers of Swedenborg as a spiritual guide, as well as the many others who study his works as philosophical disquisitions, will enjoy reading 'The Divine Attributes,' as published by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia. The print is large, clear, and distinct; the paper is excellent, and the whole mechanical execution of the book deserves great praise. The present volume includes 'The Divine

Trinity,' 'The Divine Love and Wisdom,' and 'Correspondence.'"—*N. Y. Evening Post*.

"This is a very neat edition of some of the best writings of Swedenborg, perhaps fitted to give a better impression of the author than any other selection of equal extent from his abundant writings."—*National Baptist*.

An Account of the Last Judgment and the

Babylon Destroyed: showing that all the Predictions in the Apocalypse are at this day fulfilled. Being a Relation of Things Heard and Seen. From the Latin of EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. 12mo. Cloth, 75 cents; paper, 30 cents.

Doctrine Respecting the Sacred Scripture. By

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. 12mo. Paper. 20 cents.

Doctrine Respecting Life. By Emanuel Seweden-

BORG. 12mo. Paper. 15 cents.

Doctrines of the New Jerusalem. Embracing

the Four Leading Doctrines, The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine, The Doctrine of Charity, and Intercourse between the Soul and the Body. By EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. 12mo. Cloth. \$1.75.

Elements of Character. By Mary G. Ware, author of "Death and Life," etc. 16mo. Cloth. \$1.25.

"This work is entitled to a place among the higher productions of American female literature."—*Harper's Magazine*.

Thoughts in my Garden. By Mary G. Ware, author of "Elements of Character," etc. 16mo. Cloth. \$1.25.

Death and Life. By Mary G. Ware, author of "Thoughts in my Garden," etc. 16mo. Cloth. \$1.25.

Lectures on the Nature of Spirit and of Man as a Spiritual Being. By CHAUNCEY GILES, Minister of the New Jerusalem Church. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25; paper, 60 cents.

"The volume before us is wholly Swedenborgian. We think that nowhere can be found a book from which so clear and so compressed a view of the leading doctrines of this rapidly growing sect can be obtained."—*Historical Magazine*.

"It adheres rigidly to the received principles of Swedenborg's teachings, but it

surrounds them with lucid illustrations, clears up their apparent difficulties, enforces their logical applications, and exhibits their practical scope and bearing in a style remarkable for clearness of statement, as well as argumentative force."—*New York Tribune*.

Lectures on the Incarnation, Atonement, and Mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. By CHAUNCEY GILES, Minister of the New Jerusalem Church. 12mo. Cloth, 75 cents; paper, 40 cents.

Mistaken; or, The Seeming and the Real. By LYDIA FULLER. 12mo. Fine cloth. \$1.50.

"The work before us does the highest credit to its author. It is a pure, bright story of every-day life, beautiful in its conception, and charming in its simple yet elegant style. The plot is well conceived, and full of deep and exciting in-

terest, and the tale closes in the happiest manner conceivable. There is nothing of an unhealthy or misanthropical tone in any page of the work. The spirit of the work is excellent, and we wish every success to 'Mistaken.'"—*Star of the West*.

Life: Its Nature, Varieties, and Phenomena.

By LEO H. GRINDON, author of "Emblems," "Figurative Language," etc. First American edition. 12mo. Extra cloth. \$2.25.

"Mr. Grindon possesses the faculty of *expression*. His prose is full of poetic fancy; and facts which would be as a bundle of dry twigs in another man's hands, are fruitful and beautiful under his pen. He discusses the great and varied mysteries of life in a reflective and instructive manner, and the charm of

his poetic style renders his book at once fascinating and of value."—*Phila. Press*.

"Rarely is one met that compasses so much in so brief a space, and still more rarely is such compact condensation of most interesting matter made so very entertaining."—*Cincinnati Commercial*

A Manual of New Church Doctrine. Designed
for Sunday-School and Home Instruction. By JOHN DOUGHTY,
Pastor of the New Jerusalem Society of San Francisco. 8vo.
Boards. 50 cents.

This well-digested volume is arranged after the manner of a catechism, the questions and answers and the scriptural references relating to them being arranged in parallel columns.

Wesley and Swedenborg. A Fraternal Appeal
to Methodist Ministers, inviting them to consider the Relations of
Methodism to the New Church. By E. R. KEYES, Pastor of the
First New Church Society in Philadelphia. 12mo. Fine cloth.
75 cents.

"Mr. Keyes's brochure is admirable in spirit and a well-written condensation of Swedenborgianism."—*N. Y. World*
"Mr. Keyes's pamphlet is exceedingly well-written, and his treatment of his compound subject is striking because of the contrasts and reliefs which he employs to present first one and then the other side to the reader."—*Herald, Utica, N. Y.*

Religion and Life. By James Reed. 12mo.
Cloth. 75 cents.

Moody Mike; or, The Power of Love. A Christmas Story. By FRANK SEWALL. Illustrated. 16mo. Extra cloth. \$1.00.

"A genuine American tale, not above the comprehension of children possessed of ordinary intelligence. It is serious, too, but the plot and characters render this not out of keeping. The incidents are natural, and the little hero's change of mind from bad to good is probable enough."—*Philadelphia Press.*

The Garden of Eden. By George Yeager, A.M.
12mo. Extra cloth. 75 cents.

"The Garden of Eden" symbolizes the life of man and its dressing and keeping, the proper cultivation of the heart, affections, and better qualities of the human mind. There is many a good lesson in this pretty little volume."—*American Protestant.*

The Divine Evolution of the Churches; or, The
New Church as the Church of Humanity, its Position and Prospects considered. By GEORGE S. PHILLIPS (January Searle), author of "A History of Chicago and its Churches," etc. In an Address delivered before the New Church Congregational Union, in Philadelphia, May 21, 1871. 12mo. Paper cover. 25 cents.

"In this secular paper we can only express our admiration of its eloquence, grace, and thorough earnestness."—*Philadelphia Press.*
"The address is able and eloquent, and will afford pleasure and profit even to those who will dissent from his teachings."—*Philadelphia Inquirer.*

Talks with a Child on the Beatitudes. By the
author of "Talks with a Philosopher." 16mo. Fine cloth, 75
cents. Cloth, flexible, 50 cents.

"A volume written in a sweet, devout,
simple and tender spirit, and calculated to
edify the old as well as the young."—*Bos-
ton Ev. Transcript.*

"A charming little volume to place in
the hands of young people"—*Boston
Journal.*

Deus Homo : God-Man. By Theophilus Parsons.
Crown 8vo. Extra cloth, \$2.50.

"Perhaps no book has appeared from
the scholars of the New Church that has
promised more light to the inquirer or be-

stowed more satisfaction upon the reader."
—*Historical Magazine.*

Emanuel Swedenborg as a Philosopher and a Man
of Science. By R. L. TAFEL. Crown 8vo. Extra cloth, \$2.25.

"We invite our readers to peruse Prof.
Tafel's book. Its reading will acquaint
them with one of the greatest thinkers and

one of the purest characters that ever
lived."—*St. Louis Paper.*

Elements of Character. By Mary G. Ware,
author of "Death and Life," etc. 16mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

"This work is entitled to a place among

the higher productions of American female
literature."—*Harper's Magazine.*

Observations on the Growth of the Mind. By
SAMPSON REED. Seventh edition. 16mo. Extra cloth, \$1.

"The title of the work expresses its
character. It is an attempt to show *how*
the mind grows, and after defining the es-
sential character of the mind the author

points out, in a most interesting and orig-
inal manner, the actual development re-
quired."—*Boston Transcript.*

Observations on the Authenticity of the Gospels.
By a Layman. Second edition. 16mo. Extra cloth, \$1.

"A work that should be in everybody's
library, and especially ought steps to be
immediately taken to place it in the hands

of every theological student in our land."
—*Religious Magazine.*

"The author writes with vigor and
clearness."—*North American Review.*

Sermons on the Lord's Prayer. By Henry A.
WORCESTER. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

THE WORKS OF WILLIAM H. HOLCOMBE, M.D.

OUR CHILDREN IN HEAVEN.

New Edition. 16mo. Fine cloth. \$1.25.

"Its sweet pathos and comforting sympathy at once warm and interest us."—*Albany Journal*.

"It is written in the most devout spirit, and will interest even those who reject its doctrines."—*Buffalo Express*.

"In paper, binding, and typographical

beauty, this is a book of the first order. It is also written in a style of great elegance, sparkling with gems of prose and poetry. Moreover, the subject is one of profound and tender interest to thousands of bereaved hearts."—*Chicago Northwestern Presbyterian*.

IN BOTH WORLDS.

New Edition. 16mo. Fine cloth. \$1.25.

"While likely to prove of the deepest and most thrilling interest to all whose minds are elevated above materiality and

the grosser elements of nature, it is in no sense irreverent."—*Boston Evening Traveler*.

THE SEXES: HERE AND HEREAFTER.

12mo. Extra cloth. \$1.50.

"Whatever one may think of the doctrines of this book, it would be impossible to deny that it breathes a pure and elevated spirit, and has many thoughts which will commend themselves sympathetically to the followers of all Christian faiths."—*New York Independent*.

"We need hardly state in these col-

umns how admirably fitted is Dr. Holcombe for his task, in temperament, knowledge of his subject, literary experience, and in the mastery of a style uncommon in purity, clear, poetically expressive, and nervous or flowing as the thoughts may require."—*New Orleans Picayune*.

THE OTHER LIFE.

12mo. Extra cloth. \$1.50.

"It is a well-written, thoughtful, and earnest argument in favor of the doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg concerning the spirit-world. Even those who do not accept these doctrines with the faith of Dr.

Holcombe must be struck with the tender piety of its tone and the genuine sincerity of every line of the book."—*Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*.

SOUTHERN VOICES.

12mo. Extra cloth. \$1.50.

"As the productions of spiritualized sentiment, cultured, refined, devout, and artistic, they will be treasured by many for setting to music thoughts and feelings which nothing but rhythmic measures and poetic language can express."—*Golden Age*.

"Taste and tenderness are the prevailing characteristics of the volume."—*Philadelphia Age*.

"Dr. Holcombe has a very rich fancy, of which he has afforded evidence in the beautiful volume of poems that lies before us, and which, as the production of a Southern author of high reputation, is entitled to a more marked consideration at our hands than most of the works with which the American book market is nowadays glutted."—*New Orleans Republican*.

Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Love and

Wisdom. By EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. From the original Latin as edited by Dr. J. F. I. Tafel. Translated by R. N. Foster. Demi 8vo. Extra cloth. \$2.00.

" . . . This English version is as nearly literal as the nature of the work and the structure and spirit of our language permit. The principle upon which Mr. Foster has executed it is fully, clearly, and satisfactorily stated by him in an unusually interesting preface, which concludes thus: 'A careful perusal of it (the work) can hardly fail to convince the

thoughtful reader that it is the most remarkable combination of philosophy, illumination, and seership which either ancient or modern experience has produced.'"—*Philadelphia Press*.

"From the reading of this book, Christian love and Christian unity will be better understood and appreciated."—*Chicago Evening Journal*.

True Christian Religion. Containing the entire

Theology of the New Church, foretold by the Lord in Dan. vii. 13, 14, and Rev. xxi. 1, 2. By EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. From the Latin edition of Dr. J. F. I. Tafel. Translated by R. Norman Foster. 2 vols. demi 8vo. Tinted paper. Extra cloth. \$5.00.

True Christian Religion. By Emanuel Sweden-

BORG. 1 vol. 8vo. Cloth. \$2.25.

"Swedenborg deserves to be studied. As a philosophic writer he is not often excelled in profundity, acuteness, variety, and consistency of thought. We confess to having read for years past some portion of his works with intellectual and spiritual profit, and we imagine, at least, that we can trace his influence in the conceptions and reasonings of many modern authors of distinction, who do not always give Swedenborg the credit which he deserves. This is especially true on the subject of the devil and evil spirits, the trinity, the relation of the divine to the human in the person of Christ, the atonement, the resurrection, and the future life of heaven and hell. . . .

"Swedenborg's views are quite thoroughly and systematically set forth in the two volumes before us, which have been

translated from the Latin into English by R. Norman Foster."—*Chicago Advance*.

"The volumes of Swedenborg already given to the public in this new edition have abundantly satisfied the most exacting critics of the fitness of the translator for his difficult task. . . . Dr. Foster is simply faithful to the Latin original, remarkably happy in the choice of phrases, and of a fine style as a writer. We lack space to point out the place which Swedenborg occupies in the world of religious thought, and the particular office of the work before us. Suffice it therefore to say, that many persons of all sects are greatly interested in Swedenborg's teaching, and that it seems likely to leaven more or less the entire lump of modern religion."—*Chicago Tribune*.

Conjugal Love. By Emanuel Swedenborg.

1 vol. 8vo. Cloth. \$1.75.

Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Provi-

dence. By EMANUEL SWEDENBORG. From the original Latin as edited by Dr. J. F. I. Tafel. Translated by R. Norman Foster. Demi 8vo. Tinted paper. Extra cloth. \$2.25.

NOW READY.

THE
APOCALYPSE REVEALED.

WHEREIN ARE DISCLOSED THE ARCANA THERE
FORETOLD, WHICH HAVE HITHERTO
REMAINED CONCEALED.

FROM THE LATIN OF
EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

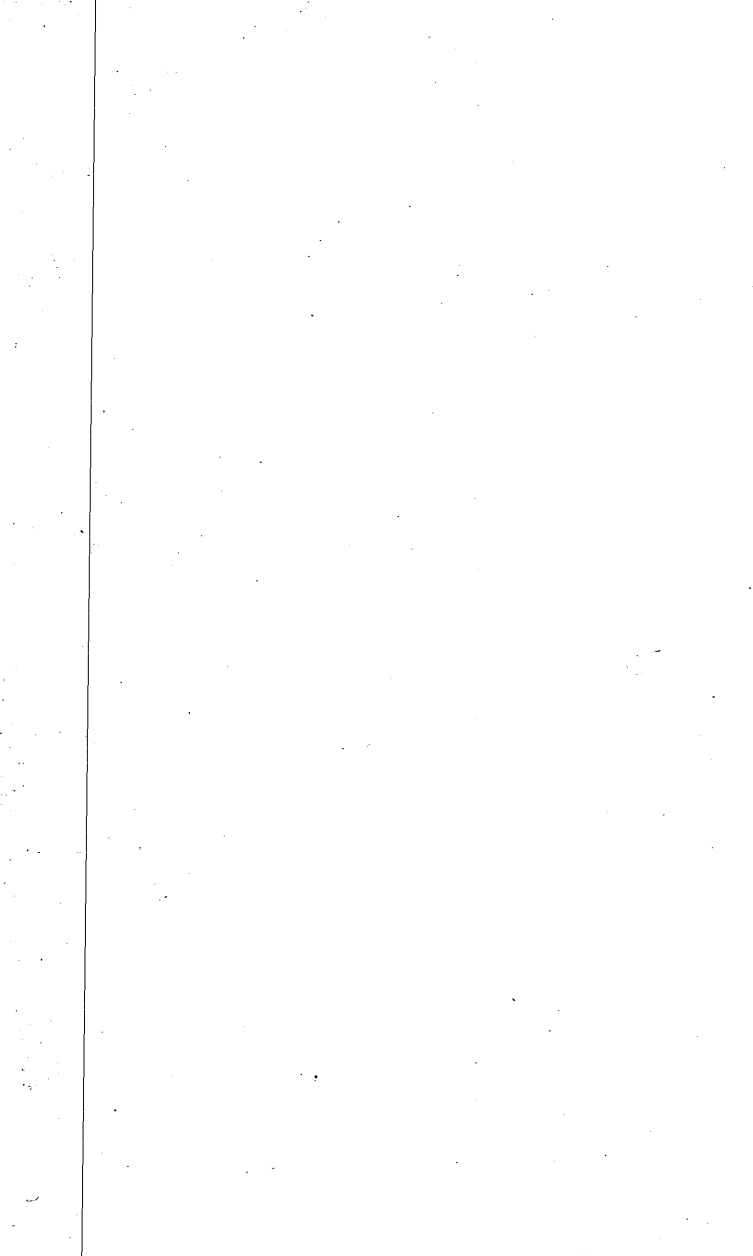
THE ROTCH EDITION.

2 Volumes. 12mo. Cloth. \$2.75.

"Within the last few years the circulation of Swedenborg's works has largely increased in this country, and a knowledge of their true character has become, in consequence, more widely known. Only the prejudiced or ignorant now regard them as weak and visionary. Their breadth and logical clearness command the respect and attention of the best minds of the age. The profoundest thinkers and the most astute theologians, when they stand face to face with Swedenborg on the rational plane of thought and doctrine, find themselves in the presence of a master-spirit."—*Philadelphia Evening Telegraph*.

. For sale by Booksellers generally, or will be sent by mail, postpaid, upon receipt of the price by

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO., Publishers,
715 and 717 Market St., Philadelphia.



BX
8721
.F27

744492.

Harrison.

The mystery
other papers

1-

43

1-

2.

is.

story of life, and
apoc.

4337

4337